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MY VANISHED AFRICA

BY PETER W. RAINIER

1940

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THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO

UMFOGAZANA KA UMPANDA KA MEHLO-o-INKUNZI, the Zulu chieftain who was my boyhood instructor in veld lore and the history of his tribe.

The memory of CECIL RHODES, my boyhood hero.

My uncle ALF HOWARD, whose stories of Rhodesia first turned my steps northward and thus saved me from being a dweller in Suburbia.

CHRIS HUMAN, the Elephant Man, with whom I first hunted big game.

TOM, my friend, whom I buried on the Ruenya River in Mozambique.

BRIGADIER-GENERAL SIR DUNCAN MACKENZIE, "Our General," in memory of a hunt in the Namib desert, with a German patrol as quarry.

GENERAL SMUTS, who will remember a chase in the South Atlantic by a German raider and a conversation on the boat deck of the old *Dunvegan Castle*.

MALACHI, my Hausa *Tarpenter* in Nigeria, in memory of the time he ran amok and was hit on the head with a pick handle.

And THE FIRST WHITE WOMAN, who lies buried among the Pagan tribes of the Bauchi plateau in West Africa.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To my wife, RUTH CHESBROUGH RAINIER, without whose help this book could never have been written. It is her book rather than mine.

To Mr. BLACKWOOD, in whose magazine a portion of Part I appeared in more condensed form, under the title of "Lean Years, Fat Years and Chaos."

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Part I

VANISHED AFRICA

To the risk of a death by drowning,

To the risk of a death by drouth.

Kipling.

MY VANISHED AFRICA

CHAPTER I

MY BIRTH IN SWAZILAND

OHE-E-E-E," shrilled Inkomazi, who was the wife of the local witch doctor, as well as tribal midwife, as she emerged from the tent in which my mother had just been confined.

"Ohe-e-e-e," waving toward the sky the bundle that was my newborn body. "Guard him, ye birds; guard him, ye beasts; feed him with your flesh that his spear hand be strong and his feet swift in the homecoming after battle."

It was the common Swazi ritual after birth which old Inkomazi was practicing, and yet—"homecoming after battle"—the phrase seems to fit somehow, although it was spoken nearly fifty years ago by an ignorant old savage. I am back in Africa *again*, writing this in our Maadi home, with the wide lawns in front, the Nile flowing by, and the pyramids of Giza shimmering in the sun glare behind the white sails of the feluccas.

It has been a battle, the life I have lived. But it has been a full life and I've lived every minute of it. I believe it has given me as much as life gives most people—maybe more. I've had my share of money at times. More than my share of excitement. Women have loved me. I've won my fights—and lost them too.

I believe it makes a story worth the telling. Diamonds in the Namib desert. Gold, rubber, wattles, and ivory in Mozambique. Back to the Namib again, this time fighting Germans. In Mozambique again after gold thieves. Mining tin in Nigeria among the Bauchi cannibals.

Afterward in the Americas, mining and draining swamps in the States; emeralds, gold, and coffee in South America.

My father had been cutting timber on contract for the new Barberton mining field in the Transvaal at the time of my birth, but my first recollection is of ox wagons. There were eleven of them. Great clumsy affairs, loaded high with freight, all but the tented one in which we lived.

"What makes your wagon run so fast, *Rooibatje*?" asked an old Boer transport rider, who was coming up the hill with his wooden axles creaking in their wooden bushings and his cowhide tires hanging in tatters from the sharp rocks of the Drakensberg passes. The Boers called all Englishmen *rooibatjes* in those days because the British soldiers still wore red coats.

"My new iron axles and iron tires, of course," cried my father, from the high wagon box which overlooked the long span of sixteen oxen in yoke as the bridge of a ship overlooks the foredeck.

"If the *Alamagtag* had meant us to use iron in our wagons he would have caused iron trees to grow in the forests," reproved the old man, wagging his beard and cracking his forty-foot lash against the flank of one of his fore oxen with a report like a pistol shot.

I loved the roaming life of a transport rider. I slept with my mother on the cartel bed made of rawhide strips, watched the country creeping by at the rate of two miles per hour from the open flap of the wagon tent, or sat proudly on the wagon box beside my father, a midshipman on the bridge, while he told me tales of the sea.

He liked the life too, when the eleven lumbering

wagons rolled ponderously across the gently heaving plain of the high veld, like a convoy of East Indiamen across a brown sea. I believe it reminded him of his life as a sailor, cut short when he jumped his ship in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, joined a wagon train for the new Barberton gold strike, met my mother, got married to her on the way by some old Boer *Predikant* in some little town in the Transvaal.

At first life had definite bounds for me: the wagon trains which plied back and forth between Barberton and Lorenzo Marques on the Indian Ocean. The sky. The veld, dotted with flat-topped trees if it were low veld, alive with moving springbok herds if it were high veld. There were no past and no future to my childish mind. Our family group and its surroundings had been created like Adam and the Garden of Eden. My sense of time was one-dimensional. It was a chance remark of an American prospector which began to open the door of the past to me.

"Rainier is the name of a mountain in Oregon," he had remarked to my father, as they squatted, lunched, by the fire beside our wagon, waiting for the coffeepot to boil.

"It's the same name," my father had replied. "Vancouver discovered the mountain and named it after a British admiral who was his friend."

"Father, why is the mountain called by our name?" I had asked afterward, poking my head under his armpit as we sat on the wagon box.

"Because the admiral was my great-grandfather. He was a sailor too and commanded the East India station. His son was a captain and became naval aide-de-camp to King William IV. His son was also a naval captain and my father."

"Father, why aren't you a sailor, then, like the others?"

"Because I failed in my navy exams and had to go into the mercantile marine instead of the navy. I didn't like that. They fed us rancid pork with worms in it on my ship—the weevils used to run out of the biscuits when we bit into them, like a covey of scared guinea fowl. We apprentice boys were supposed to be officers but they treated us worse than seamen before the mast."

MY SOUTH AFRICAN CHILDHOOD

TOWARD the end of our life as nomads in an ox wagon comes a memory of Johannesburg. A collection of corrugated-iron shanties and outspanned wagons, round which milled bearded men in moleskin trousers, who talked in mysterious terms of the *strike* of the *reef* and speculated, in general optimistically, as to the depth to which gold values would persist.

A man named Duncan Mackenzie sat by my father at the fire. A short stocky colonial of Scotch descent with fair hair, a red face, and a reputation for reckless courage which had earned him the sobriquet of "Mad Dunc" Mackenzie.

"You're a damned fool to leave it, Rainier," Mackenzie was saying as I crawled into my usual position under my father's armpit, while he sat hunched on his heels, poking the fire with a twig.

"I'm fed up with it, Dunc. I've got a boy to educate, besides the baby girl. It's time he was going to school. I'm going south to buy a farm where it's more civilized."

"But man, if you stay here you'll be rich in a year or two. Barberton was mostly a failure, but this one won't be. Cecil Rhodes is here buying claims, just as he did in Kimberley. He got rich there because everyone but he got fainthearted and sold to him cheap. Bought half of the Kimberley pipe to the tune of a case of gin per fifty-foot claim, then threw in rail fare to the Cape to get the seller out of the way. He'll do the same here; any of us

who stay will get rich with him. I'm staying. So are Percy Fitzpatrick, Tom and Stewart Meikle, and George Farrar. There's a Jew just come in, name of Solly Joel. He's buying too. Rhodes and the Jews can't both be wrong. It's not in nature. Take one more chance."

My father shook his head, to my disappointment. The sense of great events impending, which was the overtone of the Johannesburg strike, had penetrated even to my child's consciousness. I wanted to stay with all these hairy, moleskinned men and see what was going to happen.

"No, Dunc, I've made up my mind. My wife doesn't like this life and she's talked 'school for the boy' to me till I'm sick of it."

"Well, Rainier, go if you have to. Leave the family down in Natal as I did. My wife runs our farm down near Fort Nottingham. 'Cotswold' we call it. It's like a bit of old Scotland I saw when my father took me home as a kid. Some day I'm going to retire there and breed horses. Leave your family there with mine and then come back and we'll make our pile together."

But my father was adamant and walked away from the greatest gold discovery the world has ever known. Most of the men who stayed became millionaires within the next decade. They literally walked to fortune on gold. Some of their names are household words in South African history now.

It was in Natal, not far from the Zulu border, that my father finally bought his farm. I loved the place on sight. It seemed to me to have been specially made for a small boy's playground. It was a region of wooded *kloofs* which sloped gently down to the Tugela River. Beyond the river the rounded hills of Zululand held up

for view the circles of beehive huts, brown nipples on the great earth mother's green breasts, the Zulu kraals. In the kloofs dainty bushbuck slipped silently through the shoulder-high growth of staghorn moss to drink, or barked defiance to some rival ram. Ghostlike rhebok grazed on the high ridges and floated to invisibility at my approach, as they halted in their effortless flight before the first patch of protective coloring.

There was a sense of stability about the great stone house with its wide verandas which was strangely satisfying after the kaleidoscopic life I had known hitherto, through the flap of the moving tent wagon, or the campfires where the squatting circle changed its membership with every outspan.

My mother took my education in hand.

But wherever I was, about the house, at my lessons, or hunting with throwing sticks accompanied by little Zulu playmates, it was Zululand which drew my thoughts, as a magnet draws steel. My skin would creep with excitement as I pictured the Zulu impis fording the Tugela, as they had the ford above my swimming hole in days gone by, oxhide shields aloft, crane feathers nodding, heads flung back in the war chant, "If we go forward we die, if we go backward we die," to fall on the Weenen settlers and slaughter them where they fought behind the wagon circle of the *laager*.

Zululand was nominally subdued, but still under the rule of Dinizulu, last of her race of kings which Chaka had founded. Old Chief Umfogazana was still a power in the land. A great, stately savage he was. Shiny black headring, skin loin flap, and a bone snuff spoon thrust through the perforated lobe of one ear were all his wardrobe. He became my first boyhood hero. I would steal away from home, cross the river at the ford, and

take the trail which wound between hills to his kraal. He flattered me by treating me as a grownup and allowing me to sit in the ceremonial circle when the beer was passed, a distinction granted only to adults by Zulu custom.

I thrilled at Umfogazana's tales of war, told as he squatted in the shade of the reed stockade, taking snuff daintily with his little bone spoon from the round calabash snuffbox he carried somewhere in the mystery of his loin flap. I shivered at the legend of the *Itogoloshi*—told round the fire at night—the great two-headed snake which swims forever in the swamps. I absorbed the Zulu folklore till I became Zulu in thought and their complicated but melodious language came more readily to my lips than my own. In fact I was in danger of becoming native altogether had it not been for a diversion when I was about seven years old.

This was no less than the arrival of one of my mother's brothers, fresh from Rhodesia, where he had gone with Rhodes's pioneer column and stayed to fight in the Matabele War, which had just been concluded.

Umfogazana was soon outshadowed. Uncle Alf held the stage. He won my heart by a present of a hunting knife which he said he had used to cut off Matabele ears in the war. Never had there been such a companion. There were big-game stories by the dozen, some of them no doubt true. I anguished for the day when I too would be big enough to face a charging lion with an air of nonchalance and an Express rifle, ever so much bigger and deadlier than my father's old Snyder, which sent up a cloud of smoke with a roar and kicked me over backward when I pulled the trigger.

A BOER WAR SKIRMISH

IT was not until I was nine years old that I went to Weston College, in the midlands of Natal. At first the discipline of the school irked me after the freedom of the life I had enjoyed at home. It was a rough school and its code was the spartan Zulu code. The initiation for new boys was to be left alone all night in a deserted quarry to test their nerve. Those of us who could not swim were taught by the bigger boys by the simple process of heaving us into the deep end of the swimming hole and leaving us to splash our way ashore unaided. My fellow pupils had, almost without exception, the same home background as myself—childhood on some outlying farm with only Zulu children for playmates. Stick fighting and hunting small game with throwing sticks had been our sports instead of football and cricket. We knew more of the deeds of Chaka and Cetywayo than of the heroes of our own race.

But it was a good school, even though its classrooms were constructed of corrugated iron and looked more like barns than seats of learning. It was a piece of the great English public-school system, clothed in the rough shell of pioneer conditions and set down in a new country. Its masters came straight from the English universities. Under their leadership rugger and cricket were inculcated to replace the Zulu sports—and played with enthusiasm. The cadet corps drilled twice a week under old Sergeant Berkshire, owner of a neighboring farm, who “stiffened our backs and pulled in our bellies” in best British Regular style.

Soon after my arrival the Boer War broke out. Thousands of Boer burghers swarmed over the Transvaal border, drove the British forces southward into Ladysmith, and besieged them there, while fast-riding *commandoes* pushed on to meet the British reinforcements which were being landed in Durban and rushed up-country to raise the siege.

It was a warm, sunny day. The smell of the wattle bloom floated in at the classroom windows with a sticky sweetness which combined with the conjugation of a Latin verb to make the class drowsy. My gaze wandered to the window. Ladysmith lay out that way, fifty miles or so. When the wind blew from it we could hear the booming of the Boer Long Toms as they battered at the town from Umbulwana hill. Someone had said that the Boers were riding southward, headed our way.

Suddenly I stiffened. There were soldiers outside. They were dismounting from their horses behind the wall which surrounded the school grounds, tethering them under the wattle trees. I weighed my chances of escape from my seat beside the door and slipped out unnoticed.

"Seen any Boers about here, youngster?" asked the lieutenant in charge of the patrol.

"No, sir." I wished I were an officer wearing fine top boots and spurs, with a pistol hanging from my Sam Browne belt.

"Will ye look at this, sorr," cried an Irish trooper who had been posted as lookout behind the wall.

"Just look at the funny old jossers riding this way. Reg'lar toffs, by Crikey," exclaimed a cockney who had joined the Irishman.

"Top hats and long coats, begorra. It's going to

church they must be. But why would they be after taking their rifles to the priest?"

"Who are they, boy?" asked the officer.

I ran to the wall.

"They're Boers, sir. They'll be out of sight in a moment. They're riding for the gulley just ahead of them. Can't see it from here. Better shoot quick."

"Great God, boy, they're civilians. No uniforms. Can't shoot civilians, by Jove."

"The Boers haven't any uniforms, sir. They put on their best clothes to fight, same as they go to church in. They say they may meet God on the battlefield, same as in church."

I was dancing with excitement, tinged with fear. The Boers were only about two hundred yards away and might see us any moment. I had a healthy respect for their marksmanship, a respect that a young "Johnny-from-home" officer could not be expected to share. I had seen harmless-looking old gentlemen, like those riding out there, pick off running hares with their rifles.

To my relief someone took the initiative out of the officer's hands. A rifle cracked beside me and the leading Boer horse began to buck as though the bullet had burned its belly. For a second or two we were treated to as fine an exhibition of horsemanship as a circus could have provided. The elderly gentleman kept his saddle without any apparent effort, while his beard and coat-tail floated up and down with the motion of his horse. Somehow the slung rifle translated itself from his back to his hands, apparently of its own volition. As his horse settled down to a mad gallop for the gulley after its fellows, he loosed a bullet toward us, which whispered over our heads and whanged through the corrugated-iron

walls of the classroom I had just left. The drone of *amos*, *amas* stopped suddenly and there was a noise of benches being overturned.

The Boers were out of sight now, all but a row of high-crowned felt hats on the edge of the gully. Bullets came sighing toward us, whanging through the classroom behind, sputting against the wall in front or ricocheting from the top of the stonework with a menacing but minor shriek.

I wanted to run. I wanted to hide. I wanted to stay and see the fun. I compromised by crawling along the base of the wall until I found a crack through which I could see.

My attention was divided between the crack in the wall and the young officer. The hand which lifted a cigarette to his girlish lips hardly trembled at all, although he kept walking up and down behind the row of firing troopers, scorning cover, except what he got from the waist-high wall.

A trooper's hat sailed from his head, the brim on one side shot away.

But the Boers were off now. They came out of the gully at a gallop, bent low over their horses' necks. The troopers mounted in pursuit.

Our classroom was in a turmoil. Everyone had been told to lie down after the first bullet cracked through the walls. Now we lined up before the housekeeper's room to receive such of our clothes as we could conveniently carry, and were told to make our way home as best we could from Mooi River station, ten miles away.

Some of us lived up line and our homes were already in Boer hands. We were allotted to more fortunate fellows, to be kept till school reopened or our parents otherwise disposed.

DINIZULU THE DEGENERATE

INKOSIKAZI *umhlopi uy-a-f-i-l-i*—the White Queen is d-e-a-d." The long-drawn-out cry in liquid Zulu tones came winging across two hundred yards of troubled water as I stood on the Zululand bank of the lower Tugela River, hundreds of miles below my home which the Boers were even now occupying. Victoria had gone. It struck me with a sense of disaster, as though something immortal had passed.

Again the cry. Startling me this time by its nearness. From some Zulu worker in the cornfield in whose border I stood. Yet again, but fainter now, as some worker to the northward heard and passed on the message. It was as though an invisible ball of news had been hurled with terrific force from somewhere to the southward and was bounding from the earth in mile-long leaps as it sped on its way. I was hearing the bush telegraph at work. Faster and more flexible than Elizabethan beacon fires. Within the hour Dinizulu, the Zulu king, would hear it as he fattened among his sixty wives a hundred miles away.

I had been lucky in the shuffle at school, when the temporarily homeless had been allotted to the more fortunate. Jimmy Middleton had picked me out.

"Come home with me, Peter. My father's surveying for a railway in Zululand. He promised me a wagon trip with him next hols. Maybe we can get it now."

"What's that they're shouting?" came Jimmy's voice behind me as I stood listening.

"The Queen's dead. My father once said that when she died the Zulus might give trouble."

"Pooh. My father's not afraid of Zulus. When he was surveying in Canada he lived among the Indians. He's going into Zululand tomorrow to see Dinizulu about his right of way for the railway. He says we can go with him because you can speak Zulu. He's afraid native interpreters might cheat him."

There was plenty of game about as we trekked through Zululand: hartebeest and zebra mostly. I was aching for a shot at a lion. My uncle's tales of years before were seething always in my mind like yeast in dough. To bag a lion—that would be fame. The blue ribbon of the veld at ten years old! But we never saw a lion on the trip although we heard them more than once.

After Etshowe settlement was passed we moved into a Zululand as unspoiled as it had been when Cetshwayo had been king—before the Zulu armies had broken a British square at Isandhlwana and massacred a whole brigade, themselves in turn to be smashed at Ulundi a few months later.

Kraals were scattered thickly about the fertile valley of the Umfolosi, the concentric circles of beehive grass huts blending with the varied green of the cultivated fields and the dappled backs of grazing cattle. Dignified warriors stalked along the trails like bronze museum pieces come to life. The shining brown torsos of their women bobbed up and down among the cornstalks, chanting music to their hoes.

"Ho, white man. Is it true, the news? Has the White Queen really gone?" cried one.

"It is true."

"Who reigns then in the land across the water? An-

other woman? Like that Great One who has passed to the land of ghosts?"

"Her son, Edward."

"Edooard. Hau. We know him not. Is he a warrior? Can you chant us his *isibonga*, the tale of his deeds?"

Dinizulu, son of Cetywayo, of the house of Chaka, sat on a stool in the dim vastness of the royal hut. Fat bulged from his white man's frock coat where the collar cut the neck. A great naked paunch sagged between his knees. His slack lips slobbered as he greeted us.

Tears came to my eyes in my disillusionment. Chaka the Great, the empire builder; Dingana the Treacherous, the anniversary of whose defeat at the battle of Blood River was our South African national holiday; Panda the Good, friend of white men; Cetywayo the Brave, whose armies had fought the British to a standstill for so long—these Zulu kings had been my boyhood heroes. They had meant to me what Nelson, Washington, or Henry Morgan meant to the civilized boy. And *this*, Dinizulu, was their descendant—the last of their house.

Dinizulu laughed at me and called me "little woman." I hated him.

Some of my boyhood dream picture was restored at the war dance he gave in our honor. Thousands of warriors rushed across the plain in mock battle, head plumes nodding as they sped. Thousands of spear hafts made rolling thunder against the three-ply bull's hide of their oval shields. They loomed, great fantastic shapes, as they raced past us through the dust fog of their own raising. The smell of their sweat was acrid in our nostrils. The rattling of the charms they wore around their calves made a menacing undertone to the

thunder of the shields. *Bayete*—the royal salute came suddenly like the bark of human hounds, amplified a thousandfold. Then the killing cry, "*Cqbalio je-e-e-e.*" Well had their enemies known that cry in the days when Chaka's impis pushed northward to the Limpopo, southward to the Orange, carving a million square miles of empire which only the superior arms of the white man were to challenge. Even the white man had learned to fear it. Over the massacred Boer laager at Weenen it had set the vultures circling. It had brought the jackals hurrying to the feast when the British square had crumpled at Isandhlwana, to be slaughtered almost to a man. Ever it had presaged death and ripped corpses rotting in the sun. This was power, a destructive force which the word of one man could unleash across the border with terrific effect. The fathers of these men had charged time after time across this very plain of Ulundi, to the muzzles of the British guns, mowed down in thousands, losing the flower of Zululand in a desperate effort to get to close quarters where the broad-bladed stabbing spears could repeat the victory of Isandhlwana. From this very mound on which we stood by Dinizulu, the great plumed figure of Cetywayo had watched his army crumple, and raced down to lead the last desperate charge. The few survivors had at last got to grips with the enemy behind the rolling smoke clouds and shown that, weapon for weapon, man for man, an Englishman with a bayonet was no match for a Zulu wielding his *umkonto* from behind a five-foot shield.

Mr. Middleton, Jimmy, and I walked back to our wagon that night in silence. On us was a sense of awe—we had seen power incarnate, if it had a leader other than Dinizulu the degenerate.

THE BOMBATA REBELLION

IN an exasperated mood I rode the trail to Umfogazana's kraal some six years later. For one thing, in a week or two school was due to reopen after the summer holidays. For another, I had been staying at the Miller farm near Estcourt and had had a row with Winnie Miller, their pretty, flaxen-haired, sixteen-year-old daughter. Sixteen myself, I had decided to live a man's life. I was off women for good.

Old Umfogazana was also pessimistic. There was something on his mind.

"What ails you, Man of Cetywayo?" I rallied him as we sat discussing a small pot of beer in the cool shade of the hut. "Is the new wife barren? Are the cattle sick? Or is some young man offering too little *lobola* for one of your daughters?"

"None of these things, Son of my Friend."

His expression was grave, as he took snuff delicately, drawing the small bone spoon from the lobe of his ear and dipping a pinch from his snuffbox calabash.

"What then?"

"There is evil talk astir in Zululand. Bombata, chief of the Nkandhla clan, has been summoned to Dinizulu. There is rumor of war." The stilted Zulu phrases sounded like the Song of Solomon.

"There is always rumor of war," I laughed. There had been talk of unrest in Zululand ever since Queen Victoria had died. No one paid much attention to it any longer. Natal Colony had grown immeasurably in strength since the last Zulu war. We had grown to de-

spise the Zulu power, and yet—I sometimes thought of the war dance I had seen with the Middletons. If ever they were unleashed, those impis of Dinizulu's would create havoc along the border before they could be destroyed.

"Youth ever laughs at wisdom," reproved Umfogazana with dignity. "The hyena laughed at the lion and was forever condemned to eat his leavings."

"I laughed not at you, Umfogazana, who are the friend of my father and like a father to me. But the young men among you have always talked war. I have heard the talk since I was no higher than a calf and fought your sons in the cattle kraal with sticks, learning to be warriors. Tell me what you know."

"A man knows the past, but the future is hidden from all but the *isanusi*, whom the white men have forbidden to practice their arts. Of the past I will tell you because the future is but the shadow which the past casts before it.

"Chaka, the Terrible One, built his throne on the spear points of his soldiers. Dingana, his brother, murdered Chaka and ruled in his stead. Then came the first white men, the Boers, who wished to settle in Natal, which was then part of the Zulu empire which stretched from the swamps of the Limpopo River in the north to the deserts beyond the Orange River in the south. They sent a deputation to Dingana, fifty men, under their leader, Piet Retief, asking for a grant of land.

"Dingana would sell them land for a price. If they would recover for him a herd of the royal cattle which the Swazis had raided, he would grant them Natal, from the Tugela to the Umzimkulu, from the Drakensberg Mountains to the sea.

"The Boers rode north to Swaziland. After many moons they came back with the cattle. Dingana put a mark on a piece of paper which they said carried the words of his promise under the black marks upon it.

"Next morning they were bidden to Dingana's presence to take their leave. They left their guns in the huts they had occupied as it was forbidden always to bear arms in the royal enclosure. Even as they saluted Dingana they were set upon by a regiment of boys and beaten to death with sticks. It was ill done. They were brave men and had earned the right to a warrior's death upon the spear point.

"Then Dingana's impis were loosed to wipe out the Boer laagers across the Tugela. They fell upon the Boers at Weenen, where they waited in the wagon circle for the return of Piet Retief. That was a fight. My father was in it. The Boers fought bravely, women as well as men, but all were killed and their corpses ripped that their ghosts might not haunt their slayers.

"But more Boer wagons kept coming down the passes of the Drakensberg to join the remnants which Dingana's impis had overlooked. Soon their numbers were greater than before.

"As Dingana was preparing another army to sweep them from the land, his son Panda raised against Dingana the regiments which he commanded, crossed the Tugela, and joined forces with the white men. It was on the banks of a small stream that the armies met—the Blood River it is called today, because it ran red with blood that day and Dingana's fleeing impis crossed it dryshod on the bodies of the slain.

"Then Panda ruled, keeping his peace with the Boers, to whom he owed his throne.

"It was in the time of Cetywayo, son of Panda, that the British came, subjects of a woman who ruled over Boer and British alike.

"It was at Isandhlwana that we first met them in battle, where their red coats made a square on the plain as we sped toward them over a rise of land, spears aloft, shouting our war song. We laughed aloud as the square crumpled. How could the soldiers of a woman stand against the soldiers of our king? Again at Hlobane Mountain we beat them."

"You forget Rorke's Drift, Umfogazana. Where the hospital depot was. Where two young boys marshaled a hundred sick men from their beds, built a barricade of biscuit boxes, and held off the Nkomabakosi Regiment for a day—five thousand of Cetywayo's best warriors, the blood of Isandhlwana still on their spears—blocked the road to Natal and sent the Zulu impi back with only half its strength."

"I do not forget Rorke's Drift, my son. I was there. That was magic, not war. Those were not men who fought behind the boxes. They were evil spirits whom the magic of your queen had summoned to defend her borders when all her warriors were slain.

"I was at Ulundi, too, but that was different. Hau. That was a fight. I got this bayonet scar in my groin as I fought beside Cetywayo when our last charge went home."

"But all this I know, Umfogazana. You have but told me the history of your people as you have done so many times before."

"True, my son. But you asked me to tell you what I know, which is the past. I can but guess at the future."

"Guess then, Umfogazana."

"My Snake tells me that the Zulu people feared the

White Queen's magic, but that they do not fear the magic of her son who rules over us today. With us women are but the possessions of the man. We change women for cattle as white men change gold for silver, or goods for money. But some women are witches. We fear them. Such a one is our own *Inkosazana-i-Zulu*, who rides the thunderstorm before battle. We feared that other, too, who could summon ghosts to defeat our warriors. We fear no man, unless he be of the house of Chaka. Therefore I tell you that your father should take the offer which he has recently received for his farm and live no more on the border country for a while."

He rose majestically, took snuff again, and disappeared through the low doorway of the hut without another word.

I did not pass the message on for fear of ridicule. It did not matter really because I knew that my father had already sold and that another month would see the family domiciled in Pietermaritzburg; "school for the girls," of whom there were now four, had been the reason for the move this time.

But Umfogazana had been right. A few months later Bombata was in revolt. Dinizulu made no move as yet, but a word from him would set the Zulu impis rushing across the Tugela as in days gone by. Isandhlwana might be repeated and this time there might be no barricade of biscuit boxes, no Lieutenants Chard and Bromhead behind them, to stop the Zulu rush.

The rebellion itself was a dismal business. My part in it was that of a trooper of Natal Carbineers under the command of Duncan Mackenzie, my father's old friend, a colonel now. It rained incessantly. Bombata kept dodging us over half of Zululand, refusing action while

he waited for Dinizulu to give the word which would transform the rebellion of a minor chief into another Zulu war. That old hedger, Dinizulu, waited for Bombata to win some initial success before he declared himself, although Dinizulu had instigated the whole affair.

Finally Bombata was cornered and smashed. The troops were disbanded and Natal Colony settled down to its everyday affairs, not without a sigh of relief.

But the taste of active service had spoiled me for school. On my return home I declared against returning.

I encountered a stiffer resistance than Bombata had given us. My father had set his heart on the church as my profession, my mother on the law. Either entailed years of further schooling. The fact that both were unsuited to my character and absolutely distasteful to me did not seem to weigh with my parents.

The decision was suddenly taken out of their hands.

I received an order for immediate mobilization. It was a welcome communication, although I had no more idea than anyone else what we were mobilizing for. Zululand was apparently quiet now that Bombata had been slain and his forces scattered.

A week later the Natal Carbineers detrained at Ulundi railway station, from the closed boxcars in which we had been locked for the forty-eight-hour journey, to prevent news of troop movements from spreading. Straws and stable refuse were stuck to our uniforms. Horses are uneasy bedfellows on a moving train.

We had guessed our destination by that time. Dinizulu's kraal was only thirty miles from Ulundi station. No other could be our quarry. He had called me "little woman" when I had met him before. I wondered what would be the circumstances of our meeting this time, if we were to meet.

Forming up in the pouring rain behind a guide, we rode into the darkness. Mud squelched underfoot. Rain trickled down my back. The cloth of my newly issued riding breeches chafed my legs. Once my knee collided with a tree trunk, again I barely saved my hat when an unseen bough reached out for it and brushed it from my head.

We rode till dawn. Before us then was an open plain, in the middle the great cluster of concentric rings of huts which I remembered.

"Walk, march," the order came. As we rode out from the forest, I caught my breath in astonishment. Horsemen were moving simultaneously from the trees in every direction. The kraal was ringed with horsemen, moving steadily forward.

"O-u-u!" cried an old woman, giving the alarm, as she came to draw water from the stream which we were already crossing. She turned so suddenly to run that the calabash slipped from her head and crashed to the ground.

Warriors swarmed like bees from behind the reed stockade. They stood stockstill when they saw us, a mob of men without a leader for the moment. We had caught them napping.

Colonel Mackenzie dismounted.

"No. 1 Troop, B Squadron, will follow the colonel," came the order.

It was my own troop. Chance had ruled that I was to see the actual ending of the reign of the house of Chaka.

With bayonets fixed we pushed our way roughly through the angry, disorganized horde of Zulu warriors to the royal hut. Colonel Mackenzie kicked in the door of the hut without ceremony and ordered Dinizulu out.

With much grunting on his part and some pulling and pushing on the part of his counselors, Dinizulu was got through the low doorway and helped to stand erect. Pity struggled with loathing in my mind as I watched him, a ring of rifles pointed at his great heaving belly.

Suddenly he straightened. With something of the royal dignity for which his forebears had been famous, he spoke. For a moment he revived my childhood picture of a Zulu king.

"Is it thus that you greet a king? Know ye that he who breaks down the door of the house of a king must die? Since Chaka first sat upon the royal stool, no man has defied his house as thou hast this day—and lived."

The hum of astonishment which had risen from the warriors around us at the breaking down of the door died suddenly at Dinizulu's words. Had they found a leader after all? I felt them edging closer, heard their short, excited breathing, smelled the acrid smell of many naked bodies. My flesh crept at the thought of the spear points clustered within a yard of my back. Another minute of this and we would be speared from behind. The troops outside would avenge us most thoroughly, there were enough of them to massacre the whole kraal, but they could not possibly intervene in time to save No. 1 Troop if we were attacked.

Cool as ever, Colonel Mackenzie saved the situation.

"O foolish king," he cried. "Fool and craven, who let Bombata die while you sat among your wives. Had you led these warriors then, when the time was ripe, the minds of your people would have set you beside your father, Cetywayo, a warrior king. Why should they die for you now, a proven coward, without hope of victory?"

There was a muttering among the crowd as his words

went home. I felt an easing of the tension. He had struck the right note.

"DINIZULU," bellowed Mackenzie suddenly and placed his hand upon the great black shoulder, "IN THE NAME OF THE KING I ARREST YOU FOR HIGH TREASON."

Dinizulu wilted and what majesty he had assumed dropped from him.

We closed around him and marched him through a lane of his own warriors. A wagon was found. He was literally loaded on it, with a few of his favorite wives, and carted to the railway, en route to Pietermaritzburg to stand trial.

Dinizulu was found guilty and sentenced to exile for life on a farm in distant Cape Colony.

There was no shadow of a doubt of Dinizulu's guilt, but his was not all the blame for the rebellion, although his was the word which had sent Bombata to revolt.

Some time later in Pietermaritzburg I saw a couple of elderly English virgins walking up Church Street. White shirtwaists with high, stiff collars served to corroborate the state of virtue which their sanctimonious expressions claimed. Thick-soled shoes of the "sensible" type beat upon the pavements a rhythm which advertised to all and sundry the piety of their mission. Between them, a handle in each hand, was a large luncheon basket. Few stared at them but I. They were a daily sight, making a solemn pilgrimage each day to take "poor persecuted Dinizulu" his lunch in Pietermaritzburg jail where he was lodged pending sentence. It was even rumored that one of those bullying jail officials had searched the lunch basket one day and extracted therefrom a bottle of whiskey.

Rumor had it also that this pious gray-haired couple

would have stood beside Dinizulu in the dock if they had had their deserts. But an eminent bishop had been their father and the power of the Church was great.

There were also several Negroes from the United States who should have had their activities curtailed for a considerable time in spite of their sacred calling. They had been preaching among the Zulus the Ethiopian mission, "Africa for the Africans," and had done their bit in fomenting trouble. They saved themselves by boarding a tramp steamer in Durban one jump ahead of the police and disappeared for parts unknown.

DESERT DIAMONDS

IT was in the Horseshoe Hotel bar in Pietermaritzburg that I met Walter Airey. I was back home for a brief visit, with money in my pocket to take me to Rhodesia or the newer lands beyond, when it was over. It had taken me a year to get that money. Some of it came from a shepherd's wages—how I had hated the five thousand silly bleaters in my charge as I grazed them for three months in the Alleman's Nek range of the Transvaal. More of it came from shooting baboons at a shilling a head in the Drakensberg Mountains, bounty paid by a farmer to save his corn. But by far the most of it came from a fencing contract in the Orange Free State—on the place of Piet Joubert, son of the old Boer commander-in-chief who had died during the siege of Ladysmith.

Some chance remark of mine about the taking of Dinizulu had provoked a reciprocatory story from Airey. If I had imagined the pickle into which that meeting was to lead me!

"You were young to fight, weren't you?" I asked. He looked little over twenty and the Boer War had ended six years before.

"Came out at sixteen—Yeomanry—ran away from school. Got pipped at Magersfontein and sent back home."

"What brought you out again?"

"Old man died and left me enough to get along with. But what are you doing in this dead hole?" He looked at

me, puzzled. "'Sleepy Hollow' is the right name for it. You look too much alive to live here."

"I've been in the Free State, contracting," I replied with great importance. "I'm leaving for Rhodesia, maybe even further, in a few days."

"I'm looking for a partner," Airey continued. "Came here to see a man I'd heard of but he won't suit. Got a scheme on. It's sound but sounds wild, if you see what I mean. I'll tell you about it if you keep it under your hat."

"Righto."

"What brought me from home was the new diamond strike in Damaraland, German Southwest Africa. Heard about it?"

I nodded. The papers were full of it. Diamonds had been found lying loose in the sands of the Namib desert back of Luderitzbucht. There had been the usual rush to stake claims. Some of them appeared to have turned out quite rich, but the workable area was limited by lack of water and the difficulty of transporting it in sufficient quantities through the shifting sand dunes of the desert.

"Well, I happened to come out from home with a geologist who had spent some time in Luderitzbucht. Well-known man. Supposed to be the ultimate authority on diamond formations. He told me that it was almost certain the diamond formations extended right into the interior, in a northeasterly direction from Luderitz. My scheme is to outfit for an expedition to land in Conception Bay, two hundred miles north of Luderitz, then strike inland with camels to locate the extension of the field."

"How far inland would you strike it if the geologist is right?"

"He guessed about a hundred miles."

"Wouldn't you strike it closer to the coast nearer Luderitzbucht; for instance a little way beyond its known extension? Seems to me less risky."

"Yes, but there's no chance of landing supplies along the coast until you get to Conception Bay. I've just spent three months in Luderitz finding out what the diamond formations look like and gathering information. Conception Bay is the best bet, no doubt of it."

"Sounds attractive—but tough."

"Why not come in with me?"

"Man, that would cost thousands. I've got only my fare to Rhodesia and a bit over."

"I don't need your money—I need someone who is used to the veld. All I know about African travel is what I learned in a few months as a Yeomanry trooper. I'll put up the money and give you a ten per cent interest in anything we find, plus your expenses."

We struck a bargain along those lines. The scheme appealed to me. It could take only a few months at most—win or lose. My journey north could wait a month or two. Airey's personality had made a great impression on me, as had the scheme he had unfolded.

A month later we sailed from Capetown on *The Pride of Jesse*. I don't know who Jesse was. The old tug may have been his pride in her lusty youth; she was nothing to be proud of now. She leaked like a soapbox, wallowed like a sow, and steered like a drunken Hottentot. Her cargo of cockroaches would have sunk her had they been lead. Her engines wheezed asthmatically and broke down at irregular intervals. Her captain came aboard tacking like a lugger in a head wind, clasping tight a demi-john of Cape Smoke to a bosom which looked

hairy enough for the birds to nest in, and singing a ribald song about "Landlord, feather beds and maidens fine, fit for officers of the line."

The Pride of Jesse was ours, however, bought and paid for. We did feel proud standing on our own bridge, Airey and I.

And how I have hated camels since the day we took ours aboard in Luderitzbucht! They added their own rank flavor to the multitude of stench which *The Pride of Jesse* already exuded. We tethered them on the fore-deck. As long as they were lying down we could forget their presence while we were on the bridge, if the breeze were sufficiently strong astern. But when they stood up their long necks craned over the forward bridge railings and their heads waved slowly in our faces, forever peering, their breath like fermented refuse.

At Luderitzbucht we could probably have sold the contents of the water casks piled in our hold for enough to pay our expenses up to date. Water was selling for one shilling per gallon in that hell of black glassy rock, white flying sand, and blazing sunshine. Everyone drank beer, because it was cheaper perhaps. If Luderitzbucht camels had had any sense they would have drunk beer too, but their perverted taste preferred the warm, brackish fluid from the condensing plant on the beach.

The town was humming with the excitement of new diamond strikes. We left it as soon as our camels were aboard, glad to get clear before our colored crew should desert in a body, as they showed signs of doing, and try their luck at diamond digging on their own account.

By the grace of God and the luck of landlubbers, we dropped anchor a few days later in Conception Bay, with the thermometer in the cabin registering 120° Fahr-

enheit and the threat of a storm rolling in the combers from the unprotected southwest quarter. I went overboard for a swim and came up gasping for breath. Unbelievable, but the water was icy cold. Something to do with the Antarctic current which hit the coast hereabouts, Airey said.

Our nearest neighbor was in Luderitzbucht, except perhaps for a few wandering Bushmen in the sandy wastes inland—paleolithic survivors of the original inhabitants of the subcontinent, who had been pushed out of their habitat by the incursion of the Bantu tribes from the northward, centuries before.

We established our base among the sand dunes behind the beach. This base would be left in charge of two of our colored crew. Two more would accompany us inland. Still another two would direct the camel train which would maintain connection between Conception Bay and ourselves, out in the blue. The balance were to go back to Capetown in *The Pride of Jesse*, to return monthly with more water, camel fodder, and supplies.

In a shelter of baled hay, roofed over with tarpaulin, we lived for three months in the inner Namib desert. Had the spirit of this Godforsaken place been set to music it would have been a dirge. The white caldron of the sun was a menace of death as Airey and I lay panting among the hay bales with the thermometer at 140° Fahrenheit, until one or other of us would rise and, for the sake of sheer self-reassurance, measure once more the level of the precious water in the barrels.

There was death in the whirling sandstorms when we huddled behind our saddles, our saddle blankets around our heads to filter our breathing, and visibility down to zero. At such times our hands were always on the pocket

compasses—self-reassurance again—which alone could direct us back to safety in case the storm should persist beyond the limits of our water bottles.

There was death too in the chill silence of the desert night, when we woke from sleep with a start and clutched at one another, to be sure there was at least one other inhabitant of this deserted planet.

Strangely enough there was life in this dead place—though what it subsisted on was not readily apparent, as there was no open water within a hundred miles.

Wild ostriches there were, springbok, and an occasional lordly gemsbok. Jackals sneaked around our camp and yipped at the moon. There was also a queer miniature brown rabbit with a black tail who was so tame he would hardly move out of our way. He would sit up and look at us, wriggling his nose, at three or four yards' range. Small birds would perch on our shoulders, so tame were they, proof that man to them was an unknown danger.

The narra melon was the secret of the existence of these creatures. About the size of a cantaloupe, its pulp almost pure water inside a hard shell, it grows beneath the surface in the lee of sand drifts.

A white-hot inferno. I moved my feet uneasily as the heat struck up through the soles of my boots. My hands were sore where the iron prospector's pan had blistered them and the sand grains worked into the blisters.

Hot, sore, and parched, I straightened up and began to blow the sand grains from the handful I had collected in the bottom of my pan. Soon there was nothing but a small residue of the heavier minerals. Those tiny brown grains were cassiterite, Walter had told me—tin ore. But who wanted tin? The black grains were elminite, iron. The red ones ore of mercury. Every color of the

rainbow, minerals by the dozen, but never the glassy sparkle in the pan which would mean a diamond. In disgust I flung down my pan.

For a month we had been testing, ever since we had reached that camp, away back, which we reckoned was about eighty miles inland. The camp where the camel had torn the trousers off one of the boys, then shaken them aloft as a terrier shakes a rat.

Sand, heat, and thirst by day. Cold and thirst by night. Always thirst, because we had to save an emergency ration of water for fear of accidents to those six camels which trekked through with our supplies each week from the base we had established among the sand dunes of Conception Bay.

Did the diamond belt really extend this far into the Namib desert? I was beginning to doubt it, although that damned fool Walter didn't seem discouraged. He had outfitted for three months' testing, he said, and test we would for that length of time.

If there had only been some way to distinguish readily the diamond-bearing formations—if they existed here—from the barren desert sands. But there wasn't. The diamond belt carried an occasional diamond loose in the surface sand. The barren formations didn't. That was all. To find the difference we had to keep on testing—testing till we found a diamond. Then more testing to establish the width of the diamond belt. Then the monumenting of claim corners with piles of rocks—and we hadn't found our first diamond yet, although we had tested the sand at fifty-yard intervals for the last twenty miles.

It was about ten o'clock. Time to knock off. At three we would start again, if no sandstorm began. Most afternoons we had to lie in our shelter among the hay bales

while the almost daily blistering sand blizzard roared overhead. Usually we spent those times talking, lifting our voices above the shriek of the wind, or reading, if there was anything unread from the mail the *Jesse* had brought on her last monthly voyage. Those stories of Walter's were good though. What a fine life he had led, yachts, theater parties, chorus girls, race meetings. I would try it myself some day when I struck it rich. He liked my stories of the veld too, although they were commonplace enough.

That was Walter over there, although one wouldn't guess that expanding and contracting brown blob was a man crouched over a pan. Mirage was bad today. Our pile of hay bales was playing queer tricks a quarter of a mile away. One moment it looked like a great flat rock standing out of water, another like a high pillar. A curse on this desert. Give me high veld or low veld, no matter which. They told the truth to a man with eyes to look. A rock was a rock and a hay bale was a hay bale on the veld.

Walter looked up from his pan as I approached. I saw the cracks in his lips open and bleed when he grinned. Cheerful swine. Sand had caked with sweat in the stubble of his face. No washing for us till we were back on the coast.

"What luck?" I croaked. My throat was dry.

He handed me the pan without a word. I took it eagerly and stirred the varicolored fragments with a finger that trembled. It was as blank as my own.

I threw it down with such violence that it clanged on the rocks and clattered as it rolled away.

He reached down into his trouser pocket, still grinning, took out a tiny paper roll, and handed it to me. There was a sparkle as I opened it—a diamond.

"By Christ—is it . . ." I stammered.

"It is, by God. It's *rr!*" he shouted. "Not worth much in itself. About half a carat. Spent more than its value on a dinner at the Savoy. But it's the proof. We're in the diamond belt. Win or lose, they can't laugh at us now when we get out. My theory was right. Even if there are not enough diamonds here to make it payable, we've proved that they exist."

Back among the hay bales Walter rummaged in a dilapidated suitcase and pulled out a bottle.

"Heidseck," he muttered. "Good year too. None of that sweet German muck. Brought this from Capetown to celebrate—in case. It's warm as pea soup. Damned pity."

Champagne with the thermometer at 140°—and no ice. It exploded when we cut the wire. Most of what we didn't get in our faces deluged the landscape. But there did remain a little with which we wetted our find.

Two months later we were back on the beach of Conception Bay, watching the great combers dashing themselves to flying snow on the shore, with a southwest gale behind them.

"What a dirty trick it would be if the old tub didn't turn up," I remarked.

"She most likely won't if she's out in this. Her rivets are loose. She's liable to have gone to the bottom unless she managed to put into Luderitzbucht. It would be tough luck. She's kept us going nicely up till now, one trip a month as regular as a liner. Kept us going till we made our find, located the best diamond field in the Namib, and monumented our claims. To make our pile all we've got to do now is to register those claims in Luderitz. I know just where to sell them when we get back

to South Africa. Saw one of the De Beers men in Maritzburg just before I met you. De Beers will take them to round off their Kimberley production. If the bally *Jesse* will only keep afloat till she leaves us in Luderitzbucht, she can sink for all I care as soon as she likes afterward." Walter kicked savagely at a bit of seaweed which a breaker had lodged near his feet.

I hadn't been really worried before at the *Jesse* being overdue. My lack of seamanship had prevented me from appreciating the danger of those great seas which kept thundering up toward us, spindrift flying from their crests like the sand drift from the dunes behind the beach. I began to worry now, because I could see that Walter was worried. It was the first time I had seen anything stir him visibly since our expedition began.

Next day the captain and crew of the *Jesse* came stumbling along the beach toward us, half dead with thirst. They had managed to keep the *Jesse* afloat till the sea began to moderate, then beached her twenty miles down the coast before she sank under their feet. We were two hundred miles from Luderitz along the beach. The only way to get there now was to walk.

Ten grueling days later we marched up the sandy street of Luderitz to Kapp's Hotel. We had loaded all our remaining water barrels on the camels, killed and eaten each camel as its load was exhausted. The last camel lay a day's march back along the beach, but we had got through.

We paid off our men and spent the last of our cash on a new outfit of clothes. Penniless but rich. Even my ten per cent of the probable price of our find meant more money than I had hoped to earn in years.

Jubilant and victorious after so much pain, we made a night of it, signing chits for drinks. Everyone would

be rushing to lend us money as soon as we published the news of our find, which we could safely do next morning after we had fulfilled the formality of registering our claims.

"What can we do for you, gentlemen?" asked the heavy-jowled, potbellied German official in faultless English.

"We have claims to register. Here is the map which your regulations require, with latitude and longitude marked. Here are the descriptions of the claims. I think you will find them in order." Walter knew the procedure thoroughly. His meticulous mind would allow no flaws to creep into our mine titles.

"H'm," the official looked us over, then the map which Walter had handed to him. He walked to the big map hanging on the wall and compared latitude and longitude.

He was back in a moment, the personification of suavity.

"It is much to be regretted. The claims cannot be registered."

"WHAT?"

"I regret."

"Why not? The law has been complied with. Everything is in order."

"All but one thing. You have been prospecting in a closed area where prospecting is forbidden under heavy penalty."

"Who said it was closed? It was open when we left Luderitz three months ago. I checked it on your map." Walter had turned very white and I noticed his hands trembling.

The official handed us the copy of a recent decree. It was dated barely a month previous. We gazed at one an-

other in consternation, then at him. It was the air of triumph on his face that suddenly brought home to us the fact that this had not happened by chance. News of our find had leaked out and this was a scheme to deprive us of it.

"The dirty . . ." I began, but Walter caught my arm.

"Shut up," he cried. "There's nothing more we can do here. We've got to get to a lawyer."

"But there is something yet to do," said the official pompously. "Much to do. There is the penalty."

"What penalty?"

"You have broken the law."

"We'll see about that."

"We will see—now."

As though the last word had been a signal two big policemen stood beside us. Before we could recover from our surprise we were handcuffed and marched down the street to jail.

After an hour in a clean but dismal cell we were marched before a judge.

The judge sentenced us to deportation in the first outgoing ship, without allowing us a word in our defense.

Within the hour after the sentence we were at the dock and being hustled aboard a little guano schooner. She carried a full load of guano, her deck was inches deep with it.

The crew were colored boys from the Cape. Eight feet square their forecastle measured, their only quarters. They asked us to share it, a sporting gesture which we refused. We preferred the deck, guano and all. There was fresh air on deck.

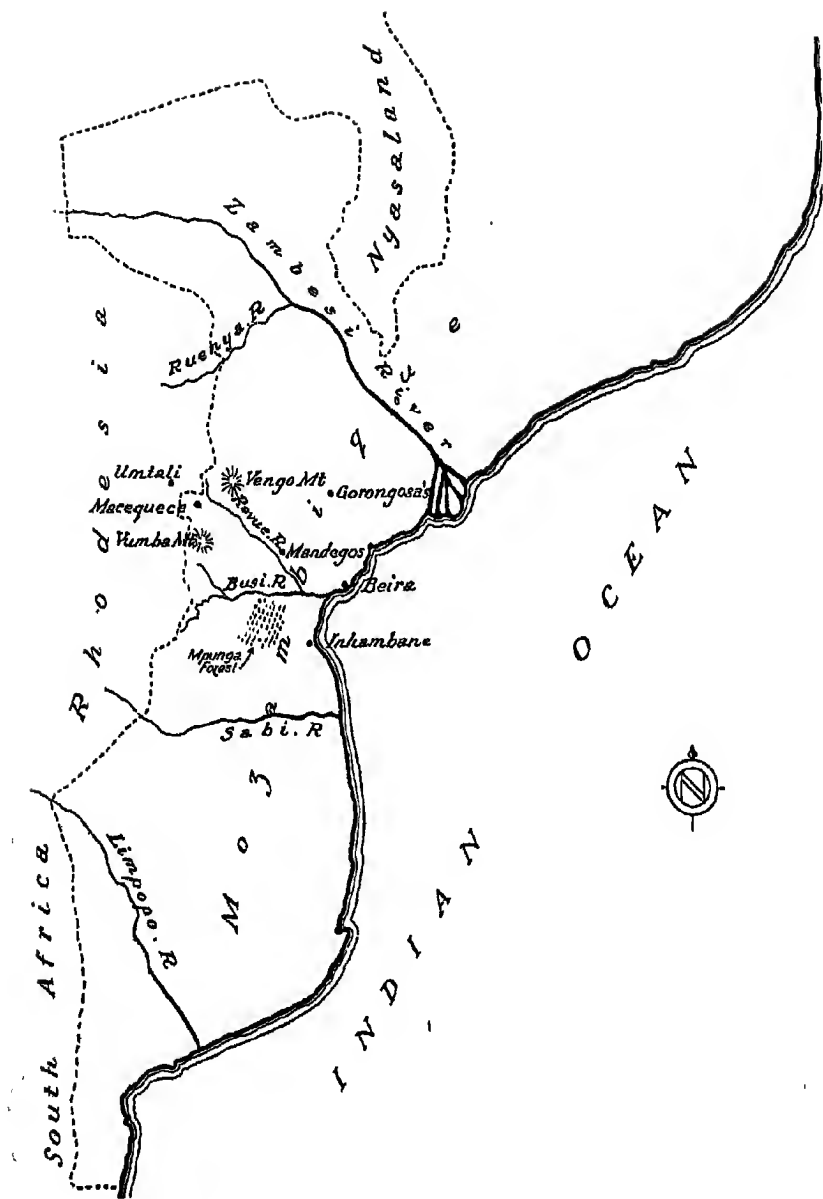
A week we lived in that offal. Dry guano was bad

enough. But when the weather roughened after four days the powder turned to reeking, sodden paste. *The Pride of Jesse* was a lady's boudoir compared to that.

A pair of untouchables, we stood on the dock at Capetown. People skirted us to windward. Dogs sniffed at us. We had not even cab fare uptown, and no cab would have taken us aboard had we had the fare.

Walter had friends in Capetown. A telephone call brought a smart-looking carriage, whose coachman covered the cushions with horse blankets before he let us in.

They fairly boiled us in hot baths, while they burned our clothes in the back yard and sent downtown to buy us new outfits.



REVOLUTION IN MOZAMBIQUE

WHAT lies beyond that rim?" I asked a settler by the way.

"No one been there much yet," he grinned. "Lions, big game, natives, gold maybe. Go and look if you want to know."

It was spring—September. The flat-topped trees of the Rhodesian veld were changing leaf. Gold to bronze, bronze to yellow, yellow to green. The patchwork carpet spread in great undulations to the far horizon.

The train stopped suddenly. The passengers piled out, taking their rifles from the baggage racks as they went. The dining car needed meat and game had been sighted.

Finally the train turned and twisted down the escarpment, Rhodesia was left behind, and I was in Mozambique. The sun beat hotter at the lower elevation. A little whitewashed town appeared—Macequece.

I have always carried pleasant memories of Macequece—heaven alone knows why. Its reputation was worse than that of almost any town in Africa—a dirty little place at the foot of the great Rhodesian escarpment. It had an appalling death rate. Its only diversion—apart from drink, brothels, and politics—was the passing of the biweekly passenger train between Salisbury and Beira.

If the revolution had been staged for my special benefit it could not have been timed better. It began just as I landed in Macequece from the Salisbury train after a year in Rhodesia.

There were some five hundred Portuguese inhabitants in Macequece. One never found them far afield. Half a day's march from their vino tinto was about the limit of their habitat. They left the development of their country to anyone else who liked to undertake it.

They were about evenly divided in the revolution. Those who had government jobs were the loyalists. Those who didn't were the rebels. I believe it was a strictly local affair and confined to Macequece.

There was a large and excited crowd to meet the train when I stepped onto the little station platform. I carried no baggage except my rifle. In those days in that part of the world no one traveled very far from home without his rifle. From Salisbury in Rhodesia to the Indian Ocean civilization was represented by one narrow strip, a few miles wide, along the Beira and Mashonaland railway. Walk off at right angles to the railway, almost anywhere along that strip, and in a few hours at most you would be in a virgin wilderness and largely dependent on your rifle for what you ate.

My first inkling that the crowd was not there to meet just such distinguished strangers as myself was when a little Portuguese tried forcibly to possess himself of my rifle—I found out later that the "have-not" party were very deficient in armament.

If the Portuguese had demanded my purse, which was empty thanks to a recent "Slippery Sam" session, or my shirt, which was ragged, he would probably have got them without much trouble. But not my rifle. I hung on to it tight.

A couple of Portuguese policemen now pushed their way through the mob which had surrounded us and announced their intention of arresting both of us. They

represented law, order, and the "have" or job-holding party.

That mob was evidently "have-not." As one man they fell on the two policemen and took their swords and pistols away from them. I took advantage of the diversion to edge out of the crowd. Looking out for some place of refuge, I noticed a man beckoning to me from a hotel across the street, a short, sturdy, English-looking person, dressed in the usual khaki shirt and slacks.

I crossed the street fast.

The crowd had forgotten me, however. It milled up the street, punctuating its progress with loud shouts of *viva Cardozo*—he was the man who attacked me, I suppose. It left behind two sorrowful, disheveled, and disarmed policemen.

The veranda once gained, my benefactor grabbed me by the arm and rushed me inside the bar.

"What's up, Tom?" drawled a voice. I finally made out its owner, a lanky individual clad in starched and spotless whites, reclining on a deck chair withdrawn into the cool gloom of a corner.

"A riot, Raffles," was the reply from the man beside me. "They tried to pinch this chap's rifle."

"Who did?" drawled Raffles. It was only later, when I made the mistake of calling him "Mr. Raffles," that I learned it was a nickname bestowed because of his aristocratic appearance.

"The crowd at the station. They've apparently started off a revolution, been talking about it long enough. Pinched the guns off two bobbies already. They'll loot the bars next."

As though to lend emphasis to the statement, a stone whizzed by us and smashed the big mirror behind the bar. The mob was back.

I fumbled at my rifle, but Tom stopped me.

"Don't do it, laddie. You'll only land in jail. This isn't our show. Let's get upstairs and they'll forget all about us. The hotelkeeper's out in the street enjoying himself and the building is empty."

This we proceeded to do, and he proved to be right. He found a corner room from which we had an excellent view of the street intersection below. In a moment or two Raffles joined us. His movements had been slightly handicapped by a case of whiskey under one arm and a sack of bread and tinned meats under the other, both gathered up from below, "to save them from the mob," as he explained. We were now equipped for a siege.

The revolution lasted about three days in Macequece. It resulted in a glorious victory for the "haves." They had the guns and the money. The victory was nonetheless glorious because it was almost bloodless. There was more alcohol consumed than powder, more *vivas* flying than bullets.

We also did our part in the good work. It was after the third bottle, I think, that we found a case of dynamite under the bed which Tom occupied. It seemed that someone had a mine somewhere out in the bush—everyone in Mozambique seemed to have a hole in the ground somewhere and deluded himself that it was a mine and about to make his fortune.

After the discovery of the dynamite, our neutrality became more belligerent than benevolent. We began to distribute dynamite bombs among the passers-by in the street with the strictest impartiality as to their politics. We hurt nobody because the fuses fizzled so long that they had plenty of warning, although several probably had their life spans shortened by fright. On the whole we enjoyed the revolution thoroughly.

CHRIS, THE ELEPHANT MAN

THE hotel from which we had contributed our part to the revolution had become our fortress by accident. Tom and Raffles had happened to stop in there for a drink just before my train arrived. As we walked across the street to Chris Human's Hotel, where they lived, I wondered what had become of our late involuntary host, whom I had never even seen—as far as I knew we had been the only people in the hotel throughout the affair. We learned later that he had been clapped into jail early in the proceedings and stayed there for some considerable time.

"What brought you two to Macequece?" I asked.

They both looked sharply at me. I felt a sudden chill in the warm relations which several days of companionship had engendered.

"You will find Human's Hotel quite the better of the two hotels which Macequece possesses," drawled Raffles in the tone which had given him his sobriquet.

I was rebuked. Such questions were out of order in the Mozambique of those days.

My introduction to the country seemed fated to be hectic. We found Human in a heated argument with a man who was speaking Portuguese with the speed and concussion of a Gatling gun. He shook his fist in Human's face as we stepped into the creeper-shaded veranda.

Then Human hit him. There was no science about the blow. It started somewhere about the level of the knee and traveled in an arc which ended in the big Portuguese's

face. The veriest amateur would have seen it coming, but not the Portuguese. He left his face in the way. With a noise like a sledge hammer hitting a block of wood, the great fist caught him on the chin. The Portuguese left the ground, sailed over a small table without touching it, and fell in a heap on the floor.

Human watched him for a moment, while he rubbed a skinned knuckle reflectively on a thigh almost as thick as a small man's body. A boy came running and revived the Portuguese with a bucket of water.

A wide grin split Human's face as he caught sight of Raffles.

"Where the hell did you get to while the fun was on?" he queried.

Raffles replied with a jerk of his thumb toward the hotel across the street.

Before the day was over I met Human's wife, a shapeless mess of an old woman who talked baby talk to a pair of evil-looking parrots.

"What a terrible place is this Maccquece, young man," she wailed, almost on sight. "Oh, so different to my dear Vienna. And my husband, a good man—no preeding, no culture, no man for an artist such as I—thinks of nothing but land—make money, puy land, run cows on land—cows die and he must make more money to puy more land to put more cows on that they may die also. And how he treat me—ME—that the most peautiful young actress on the Vienna stage was, and a star would have been had not I throw myself away on this. . . ." Here she gave a dramatic gesture to take in all Macequece and a large part of Mozambique thrown in. "Do you pelieve it, young man. . . ." Here she began a record of her husband's infidelities, omitting no details but the ladies' names.

Fortunately Tom rescued me at the moment.

"She doesn't take long to get confidential, does she?" he laughed, as soon as we were out of the room.

"Where the devil does the old man find his women in this place?" I asked. "I haven't seen anything yet I'd cross the street to look at."

"The old girl's crazy. The native servants say that the spirit has departed from her and entered into those damned parrots. It's a fact that they seem to have more sense than she has. She's got the best husband in the world. Chris Human wouldn't look at another woman if you dropped him into a harem. Shooting elephants, dreaming of another cattle ranch, and helping our crowd of down-and-outs when we are in trouble are about all the interests the old man has left in life. He used to be wealthy until the East Coast fever killed all his cattle. Lived in Europe most of the time. Married her in Vienna out of a music hall. The old girl just can't adjust herself."

Human's Hotel was the hangout of all the foreign clement in this part of Mozambique. We tolerated the wife for the sake of the husband. When we were broke we stayed at Human's till something turned up. When we had cash we paid our debts to him, and often spent the balance with him in a prolonged or wild bust. He kept us when we were broke, took our money when we were in funds, and threw us out bodily when we became disorderly.

I soon learned that the hotel was merely his base camp. He spent most of his time in the bush. Sometimes it was a mine prospect which lured him away. Again it would be a long trip across the Zambezi with goods to trade for cattle, to be driven back and sold at the railway. Still oftener elephant would be his quarry. He was

probably second only to the most famous of all African hunters, his friend Fred Selous, who had made a fortune out of ivory from Matabeleland long before Rhodes's pioneer column had penetrated the country.

At the time I first met Chris Human he was outfitting for a trip into Chief Gorongoza's country after ivory.

"Tom tells me you are going after elephant," I remarked. I had come to Mozambique with the set idea of growing up with the country, but I had to have something to live on while I grew. Elephant hunting sounded attractive—and might be lucrative.

He grunted in reply. I was not discouraged. I knew by now that he was sparing of his speech.

"I thought of doing a bit of shooting myself," I ventured again, hopefully.

Another grunt.

"Take me with you," I blurted out.

"What can you do in the bush?" he asked.

"I can shoot."

"I can do that myself."

"I can cook."

"Boys cook."

I was becoming discouraged.

"Ever hunted elephants?" he asked.

"No."

"How do you think one hunts them?"

"Find the herd, get in range, and then shoot the biggest tusker you can see."

He put down the rifle he had been cleaning. As he rose to his feet his bulk reminded me of the animal he had hunted so often; it showed vast strength without sacrifice of agility.

"I'll tell you how elephants are hunted," he cried vehemently, with a sudden and unexpected burst of elo-

quence. "I ought to know. Fred Selous taught me when we were in Matabeleland, before Rhodes and Lobengula fell out. I've hunted them in Barotseland, in Nyasaland, on the Sabi River, and in Gorongosa's country, where I'm going now. You find the herd—yes. And how do you find it? You walk weeks maybe to get to elephant country. Then you cut spoor, fresh spoor if the elephants are feeding close. If you're lucky and the spoor is fresh you get within hearing of the herd the first day after cutting it. You camp without fires so as not to frighten them, and eat cold grub, if you've got any. That night maybe Mr. Elephant takes it into his head to change feeding ground and by dawn is sixty miles away. Takes a week to catch up with him maybe. Perhaps you spend weeks of spooring before you get your first sight of the herd. Then you watch them to pick out your tusker, sometimes for days. Then you stalk him.

"If the herd is in open country the stalk is not so bad. You may be able to drop him from a hundred yards away. If the country is thick it's different. Then, by Christ, you crawl on your belly right into the herd, almost among their feet, praying that the elephant smell is strong enough to drown your scent, looking for the pair of tusks you've marked down.

"When you've found them you shoot the bull halfway between the eye and the ear and dodge for your life among the stampeding herd. Maybe if you're lucky you get a shot at another bull as he charges past you in the long grass. If you hit him without killing him he'll turn on you. Then you do some dodging while you're getting into the right position for another shot.

"That's how elephants are hunted. If I take a green-horn with me he's liable to get excited, shoot before we are in position, and spoil weeks of work for me."

However, we finally struck a deal. He agreed to take me to teach me the business, giving me ten per cent of the ivory. I agreed. In addition to the ivory I wanted the experience. Besides I had found a man after my own heart.

I am sure now that his offer was pure charity. He had made expeditions alone many times and could have done so again.

While we were in Gorongoza's country the old chief went into rebellion against the Portuguese. We were doing reasonably well at the time among the elephants in the low, swampy country which is the beginning of the Zambezi delta, when a message from Gorongoza reached us.

It was one of his counselors who brought it. A withered old fellow with a face as shrewd as a jackal's. A couple of warriors with nasty-looking spears were his escort.

"I bring word from the king," remarked the old man after some preliminaries, which included on his part the taking of snuff, the devouring of large quantities of meat from a sable antelope which we had shot, and the dignified acceptance of a brightly colored cotton blanket.

"What is the word?" asked Chris. The dialect which they spoke was near enough to the Zulu for me to understand.

"The king called me to his hut. 'Go to Elephant Man [Chris's native name], who hunts in the place where land becomes water,' he ordered. 'Tell him that I have had an evil dream. I dreamed that the hunting dogs fought with the jackals. As they fought they came upon a lion who had no quarrel with either. Yet in the confu-

sion of battle and because they were many, the lion was killed. It is long since I saw my friend, the Elephant Man. Tell him to come to me.' "

It was a royal command and we obeyed it, although it was apparently not backed by force.

Gorongozza treated us well. He evidently had a sincere affection for Chris. He told us that the Portuguese had had the effrontery to attempt to collect taxes from one of his villages. That although he had acquiesced in the nominal sovereignty which the Portuguese had declared over his country years before, he had no intention of allowing taxes to be paid by his subjects to anyone but himself. He had wiped out the Portuguese tax-collecting patrol and was preparing to resist the punitive expedition which he heard the Portuguese were preparing against him. He had sent for us to protect us, as he felt we should be in danger from both sides once fighting began.

He kept us with him for a month. To while away the time we organized drives against the hippos which were devastating his crops. We went a day's journey to kill a man-eating lion which was terrorizing one of his villages. We spent a good part of each day explaining to him why we would not sell him our rifles—he wanted them to use against the Portuguese.

"What brought you to Mozambique?" asked Chris one night as we sat smoking by a small fire.

I looked at him quizzically, thinking of that time I had once asked the same question of Tom and Raffles.

He chuckled with the sound which always reminded me of the gurgling noises made by the big animal which was his namesake.

"I know what's on your mind," he said. "Plenty don't like that question asked. The lads are good lads but

most of them have something they don't like to think about—a woman ruined—a regimental scandal—a career busted by drink—a horse that ran too slow—but you're too young for that."

"Well?" he persisted, as I hesitated.

"I was trying to get it into words. Two things, I guess. First were the stories my uncle used to tell me of Rhodesia when I was a small boy."

"What sort of stories?"

"Of this," I waved an arm to take in the firelight on the tree branches overhead, the hum of talk from the larger fire where our boys congregated, the little night noises from the dark bush, everything implied by the life that he and I were leading.

He nodded, understanding.

"What else?"

"It's a chance to get on. To do what your generation did further south. To get to know the country and where to look for the things worth while when the country finally opens up."

"You're right. It's a chance to get on. If you can pay the price. Blackwater, hunger, thirst, hardship, crocks in every pool of water, lions in the bush, malaria, dysentery—lack of the society of women, that's the worst. Most are afraid to pay the price."

I smiled. I was too ignorant yet to be afraid. That would come later.

"Only one thing really scares me," I admitted. "Elephants. When I creep behind you into long grass which holds elephants I'm so scared I want to vomit."

He raised his great bulk easily to his feet and knocked the ashes from his pipe against one heel.

"Elephants scare me too, although I've shot hun-

dreds of them. They're the only big game I give a damn for."

"But you've done more dangerous things than hunt elephants, although that's bad enough." I was surprised. It had never occurred to me that fear could enter such an ice-cold mechanism as was his brain when he was in a tight place. More than once I had watched his rifle come steady to the mark, when a tremor would probably have meant the end of both of us, while I sweated in an agony of fear.

"I suppose I have. But I've only been afraid at odd times doing other things. So seldom that I could count them. With elephant I'm afraid all the time. Every time I drop one I'm astonished that such a little thing as a bullet can stop an elephant. He's as heavy as a small locomotive, as active as a cat. He's just ten tons of pure concentrated bloody murder when he's charging and he scares me stiff."

"Tell me what else you've been afraid of."

"Cecil Rhodes always frightened me. He was so big I couldn't even begin to fathom his mind.

"Then there was the time that Rhodes sent me with a message to Lobengula, just before the Matabele War broke out. Rhodes wanted to avoid war if he could. Loben kept me prisoner for a month. Every day he had a slave tortured to death before my eyes to break my nerve. I was badly scared then, but didn't dare to show it. He let me go in the end. Gave me two hours' start. 'When the shadow of that hut falls at my feet my impis will be at your heels,' said the old devil. 'Tell Rhodes it is war—if you can get to him. Go.'

"Loben was a sport, even if he did like to bet with the odds in his favor. But I won, riding day and night, and the settlers were warned in time."

"Go on," I urged him. I was hearing an epic from one who was so sparing in his speech as to appear surly, except when he was talking about elephants.

"After Rhodes had made peace that time in the Matoppos when he went alone among the Matabele and risked his life to save more bloodshed—that's what earned him his native name, Umlamulainkunzi, the Man Who Tears Two Fighting Bulls Apart—after that he sent me down here to Mozambique to find out where the Portuguese border lay. No one knew much about Mozambique then, except the coast line. I had sixteen men behind me and a little six-pounder cannon.

"We found a fort on the Revue River, not far from where Macequece stands today. We went to parley and they fired on our white flag—treacherous devils.

"We got annoyed at that and battered the gate of the fort in with our little cannon. Six hundred *askaris* and a dozen Portuguese officers went out of the other gate as we stormed in over the broken one, like sheep stampeding out of a kraal gate when a leopard jumps the fence. The Portuguese never did get the trick of teaching their Negroes how to fight. We chased them a hundred miles to the Pungwe River, picking them off all the way.

"We were rotten with malaria by the time we reached the Pungwe. The Portuguese had crossed in native dug-outs. There was nothing for it but to swim the river full of crocks, if we were to continue the chase. I lost my nerve and we returned to Salisbury. Rhodes said I had done right—but I did it because I was afraid.

"The next time was in Mozambique again, near the same Pungwe River. I was transport riding then, between Beira and Salisbury. I camped on the Pungwe flats for a week or two because there was good grass

there and my oxen were thin; two Frenchmen were camped near me—rich sports, brothers, big-game hunting for fun, the poor innocents.

“One of them rushed into my camp one night, frantic. A lion had jumped his brother and dragged him into a patch of fern. He wanted me to go with him, to go after the lion in the dark, but I refused. He said the lion was wounded. It was not a case of taking chances, there would have been no chance for us at all.

“Instead we went out at daybreak. He persisted in following the spoor into the fern in spite of all I could do. I had wanted to burn the fern and smoke the lion out into the open—the man’s brother was undoubtedly long since dead.

“I followed him with my rifle ready, a light .303 Lee-Enfield. I was scared—dead scared. The Frenchman was crazy to avenge his brother. The fern was over our heads. The lion growled from somewhere ahead of us—very close—sounded like some great cat warning someone off his dinner. Then he sprang—sailing over the high fern like a horse clearing a hedge. I fired. Hit him somewhere while he was sailing through the air. But he landed on the Frenchman. There were two Frenchmen lying dead and the lion on top of one. I had got the lion between the eyes but the bullet was too light to stop him. That’s when I learned to use a heavier bore rifle.” He stroked lovingly the barrel of his heavy Rigby as he spoke.

“And then?” I prompted.

“Then I made money in mining. I bought a farm alongside of Rhodes’s place at Inyanga. Then came the East Coast fever to kill my cattle and make me poor again.”

“What will you do when you make money again?”

"Buy land and run cattle of course," was the surprised reply. The Boer hunger for land is a driving urge.

Soon after we left Gorongoza the old chief fought and badly mauled a column of Portuguese troops sent against him. He was finally subdued the following year by a foreign legion which the Portuguese raised especially for the job.

After defeating the Portuguese he came to see us in our camp. I asked him why he had befriended us while fighting our kind.

"There are three kinds of people," was his reply. "Black people, white people, and Portuguese. The black people are good. The white people are good. But the Portuguese collect money from us and are bad." He was a very human savage, Gorongoza.

By the time I returned to Macequece I had graduated as an elephant hunter and was almost holding my own with Chris as regards weight of ivory bagged. But it was a poor business. The risk was too great to be compensated by the moderate results. The big tuskers had been killed off long since.

"First came Selous and picked off the two-hundred pounders," explained Chris. "Then the rest of us came along and picked off the hundred pounders. I've combed every elephant herd in Mozambique till I know the bulls by sight and they call me by my first name. There's nothing bigger than a fifty-pound tusk left in the country and it's my last trip after elephant. The railways have killed the transport riding. Now the elephants have gone. There's no way left of making money except mining. And it takes money to farm."

A HIGH-PRICED CONCESSION

IMAGINE an area of wild, undeveloped country about the size of the state of Texas. Drain it with several great rivers which come tumbling down the Rhodesian escarpment in a succession of Niagaras, to turn sulky and sluggish when they hit the low veld plain, their waters lorded over here by the swift-darting crocodile and the lumbering hippopotamus. Bound it on the one side by the same high escarpment and on the other by the Indian Ocean. Fill in the gap with vast, rolling, tree-studded plains, where the lion preyed on great herds of game. People it with scattered native tribes, who were nominally under the control of the Portuguese Government, but some of whom had yet to see the first white man in their territory. Traverse it with one newly constructed railway, which twisted itself down the escarpment from Rhodesia and connected that country with Beira, on the Indian Ocean. Place on the railway a tiny settlement of whitewashed mud houses, whose corrugated-iron roofs crackled in the fierce heat. There you have our setting. Macequece.

From a dozen to a score our numbers varied and all were of British or South African stock, with few exceptions—the Portuguese did not count, in our estimation. There was one American—a man as tough as men are made.

Newcomers drifted in, hung around Human's bar and listened to the talk, struck up a partnership with one or other of the old hands, and went off somewhere, to be themselves classed as "old hands" when they returned.

Our ages varied from twenty to sixty—I was the youngest. A hard-bitten, hard-drinking, hard-living crowd. Necessarily our philosophy of life was affected by the fact that death stood always round the corner. The death rate among us approximated fifty per cent per annum. It about balanced the additions from outside.

To us, in our periodic returns from the wilds, Macequeece was civilization. Human's Hotel was our club. In those first years of my life in Mozambique there was not one white woman, other than Portuguesc, in Macequeece, outside the brothels, with the exception of the cracked old Austrian actress who was Human's wife.

Each center of society has its overtone. Ours was whiskey. We drank it steadily when in town. It was our compensation for the lonely life and the hardships of the bush, where we spent most of our time and where we perforce practiced a spartan virtue.

We would come in out of the beyond and drop naturally into the group which lounged in canvas chairs on Human's creeper-shaded veranda. We would swap yarns about what we had seen on trips which might have lasted months without other human companionship than that of the savages among whom we had traveled. We would ask after absent members of our group and give a brief valedictory to some friend who had dropped out for good.

Native rumor had it that one of us had been drowned when his dugout capsized on the Zambezi. A lion had mauled another down in the Inhambane country; his partner told of trying in vain to disinfect the deep claw gashes on his back by the native expedient of plunging red-hot spear points into the wounds to kill the poison which hangs to the claws of all carnivora.

We traveled by twos mostly, always on foot because the tsetse fly belts made the country impracticable for horses. Sometimes we went alone. The hope of gain was our ostensible urge—the finding of some gold deposit which would make us rich, or rubber, or ivory, or cattle to be bought cheap with beads, mirrors, and blankets, then driven back to the railway to be sold. But I think that the real urge which drove us into the bush was curiosity—the wish to see what lay behind the next purple horizon—and the game of matching our strength against the wilderness. There is a great thrill to be got by standing on some hilltop and seeing the sun rise over country which no white man has seen before.

Like soldiers in wartime we tended toward a cynical view of everything but whiskey and prostitutes. We would have laughed down with scorn the suggestion that we were driven by any motive but the wish for money with which to satisfy our lusts. Our horseplay was violent and took little stock of safety to human bones, or even human lives.

I do not think we were quite as bad as we liked to think ourselves. Whatever we were, we opened up a country for the Portuguese which they had owned for centuries without even having penetrated most of it. They were too wedded to their vino tinto, their women and siestas to be much good as pioneers.

"What do you think of that?" asked Tom, as we drank at Human's bar.

"Gold. By golly, it's gold," remarked Smith the American, weighing the little object in his hand. "Tom's bugs about gold but he doesn't know how to look for it. Been starving himself for years to shoot off dynamite in that hole-in-the-ground of his he calls a mine."

"You are as bad as Smithie," I remarked as I took

the object in my turn. "You have prospected every stream from Alaska to the Straits of Magellan by your own telling. Then what about that last trip of yours to the Inhamcarara with Zambezi Jack? Weren't you after gold?"

"Gold's all right. I've spent most of my time looking for it. But I look for it different from Tom. He spends his time chasing lodes of quartz into the guts of hills. Give me river gold, where a man can work in the sunlight instead of groveling at the end of a hole like a gopher."

I examined the thing I held in my hand. It was evidently a section, about an inch long, cut from the butt end of a wild ostrich feather. The open end was plugged with pith from a stalk of elephant grass. Heavy. With the corkscrew on my pocketknife I pulled the plug and shook onto an old envelope the little yellow grains. Smith was afire at the sight of them.

"That's the kind to look for," he cried. "River gold. See how worn and rounded the little nuggets are, bless them. Not sharp and angular like gold shot out of quartz. Those babies have traveled a long way in some river current since they were eroded out of the mother lode."

"Where did you get it, Tom?" I asked.

"On this last trip, cattle trading up on the Zambezi to raise some money to sink that winze I've been talking about for years. The vein looks good about two hundred feet in, heavy quartz and well mineralized. I'm willing to bet that there's a rich pocket there if we sink a winze fifty feet or so."

"You and your winzes," cried Smith. "You make me tired. Talking of winzes when you've got that in your hand. If you take me to where you found it I'll bet we

find more. Put the money you made from cattle into an outfit for placer mining and it will pay you better than a dozen winzes."

"Our ears are open, Tom," I said. I had been at a loose end for some time, and so had Smith.

"It was while I was driving cattle back from the Zambezi, in that old Shylock Panu's country. I found his people washing gold with calabashes along a river bank. There seemed to be a little gold everywhere near the river, but nowhere very rich. I traded a stretch of limbo for this quill."

"Was there much of a gravel bed?" asked Smith, who was examining the gold through a lens which he had taken from his pocket.

"Miles of river flats, which would most likely be all gravel."

Smith stared at him, shaking his grizzled head in a disparaging gesture.

"You hard-rock miners have got no sense at all. Heads too dopey from the fumes of dynamite to think, I guess. Miles of river flats, all gravel, and nice, coarse gold like this. And still talking about putting your money into a winze! Don't you know, you poor misguided son of a stick of dynamite, that there's more money to be made out of a big, low-grade, placer gold deposit than out of a dozen small rich pockets? Haven't I seen the big, low-grade properties worked in Alaska and California? God, on the Natomas River back of 'Frisco there's a dozen great dredges in a row, bucking their bucket lines against bedrock sixty feet below the surface, roaring till you can hear them for miles. Rocks that weigh five tons apiece go through their revolving screens. The high-pressure pumps play water on rock and gravel to wash the gold off them, and throw washed-out gravel two

hundred feet astern from the end of their stackers like the dung of some great beast. Those dredging companies are paying dividends on gravel that carries no more than twenty cents in gold to the cubic yard. Now, Tom, how much gravel do you think the Negro washed to get the gold in this quill?"

"Don't know, Smithie. I wasn't thinking along those lines as I watched him do it. Couple of cubic yards maybe."

"Call it a couple of cubic yards, then. There's a dollar's worth of gold here, or thereabouts," mused Smith. "That would make it fifty cents per cubic yard. If you can prove that the river is carrying anything like that value on the average, any big mining company would jump at the chance of paying you more money than you'll ever be able to spend."

"You win, Smithie," cried Tom. "I'll put up the money if you two will go with me. Third shares after I get my money back, if we make anything."

"Shake," cried Smith, extending a paw which had been calloused by a generation of driving picks into gravel and shaking down metal residues in miners' pans.

"What river is it, Tom?" I asked as I too shook and called for another round of drinks with which to seal the contract.

"The Ruenya. Tributary of the Zambezi, about two hundred miles north of here."

I found, on arrival at the Ruenya, that prospecting for gold was a great deal easier than hunting for a diamond belt as Walter and I had in the Namib. There was gold undoubtedly in the river flats where we prospected. In almost every pan there was a speck or two, sometimes even a tiny rounded nugget like a pinhead.

"Water at fifteen feet and no bedrock yet," remarked Smith as we stood on the edge of the three-by-six-foot pit we had laboriously sunk, its upper part roughly lined with timber to prevent the loose gravel caving in. "The richest ground always lies on bedrock but we can't sink deeper without pumps. It's not a bad showing, though. Thirty cents to the cubic yard, I make it. If we sink another dozen holes and they pan out as good as this one on the average, we've got something. Then we go back to civilization and, on the showing we've made, we can easy raise the money to bring in pumps and proper equipment and do the job right. Then a sale to one of the big Johannesburg companies and it's us for the bright lights."

Next day Smith fell, while hunting meat for the pot, and broke his leg—a compound fracture just below the knee.

Fortunately it happened near to camp. Smith made his way to within shouting distance on "three legs," dragging the broken one behind him.

Tom and I picked him up and carried him in, his broken leg dangling hideously as he sat on our interlocked hands with his arms round our necks. He had fainted before we laid him gently on the tent floor.

Then I saw a different Tom from the easygoing, smiling chap I had known hitherto. In a trice he had slit the trouser leg with his belt knife and exposed a bloody mass of flesh from which broken pieces of bone protruded.

"The poor bloody fool," he muttered. "If he had only stayed where he was instead of dragging a broken bone. How in the name of God is a man to tackle that without a surgeon's kit?"

He turned to me.

"Get that kettle boiling, quick. While you're doing it cut me the straightest sticks from the bush that you can find. We'll have to use them as splints. Get a move on—don't stand and goggle." He barked his orders like an army colonel. Somehow his air of efficiency and command stiffened me. Poor Smith's leg had given me a helpless feeling. This had been my first mishap in the bush and it had brought home to me the odds against which we fought.

By the time the splints and water were ready Tom had picked out the visible pieces of broken bone and set the break. We disinfected the wounds with a hot solution of permanganate of potash, which with quinine constituted our only drugs.

"A poor job, but the best I could do," he remarked sadly.

"Why, Tom," I cried, "I don't see how a doctor could have done better."

"I am a doctor," replied Tom with a crooked grin. "Or I was once. Interne at Guy's, before—" he caught himself and stopped.

Tom shook his head a few days later, as we stood over poor Smith's groaning body and noted the inflammation spreading up the leg from the break.

"Amputation's the only thing to save him," Tom said dismally. "But it's even more likely to kill him. Christ. To amputate a leg with no anesthetic and no kit but a skinning knife and a wood saw!"

"Don't you have to tie arteries and things?" I asked weakly.

"Cauterize like they did in Nelson's time. Dip his leg in boiling tar—only there's no tar. Still we could cauterize with a red-hot iron; that axhead would do."

Four of Panu's savages held him while we did it.

Then I went outside and vomited while Tom cleaned the knife and saw.

We built a litter for his transportation back to Macequece, but we had no boys to carry it and the trade goods, with which we could have hired carriers, were exhausted.

I went to see old Panu.

"Panu, I want eight strong men to carry Ismiti to Macequece."

"Ismiti is big man, very heavy. The men must be well paid."

"They shall have two stretches of limbo for each day when they arrive in Macequece." This was double pay.

"Good, but the limbo must be paid first."

"We have no limbo here, plenty in Macequece."

"Pay men first, then men go."

"But we have no limbo here to pay. Ismiti will die."

"Good. Better he die. He cannot hunt with one leg. Better he die than have his women starve for want of meat."

We finally struck a bargain. The men were to receive the pay as stated in Macequece. As advance payment we were to render a service. Great droves of hippos lived in the shallow reaches of the Ruenya River and periodically devastated the tribal crops. For one hundred hippos killed the men would go. A hundred hippos was the price of Smith's life. The ivory was to be ours—I stuck out for that. It would pay Smith's hospital bill when we got him back to civilization.

We organized a drive. Hundreds of Panu's spear-armed Sena warriors drove the swampy flats toward the trees where we lay in ambush. With shouts of execration and yells of triumph they herded the great brutes, which were as clumsy on land as they were agile in the

water, but protected from the flimsy spears of the natives by their inch-thick armor-plated hide.

We shot them from boughs as they lumbered along below us. It was like shooting cattle. Day by day we slaughtered till the tally was complete. All night long the Senas feasted on the coarse hippo meat, drank native millet beer, and danced round their fires, shouting their triumph over the scourge of their fields.

It was years later when next I met Smith, after having left him in the Macequece hospital.

"What hurt the most when Tom and I did that job on your leg?" I asked as we sat and drank together.

"Waal," he replied, waving a neatly turned wooden substitute, "Tom's knife was bad, but when you put that saw to the bone it sure did set my teeth on edge."

Within a month of our arrival in Macequece, Tom and I were on our way north again. We had left Smith as soon as he was on the mend.

The rains were over and the going good. We made excellent time for three days. Then Tom fell into a game pit, a common device of the natives for trapping the larger animals which are difficult for them to kill. It is a deep V-shaped pit, set in a game trail, with a pointed stake at the bottom to receive the victim. Its whole existence is cleverly concealed by a light covering of twigs and leaves.

I heard a shout from the head of the column, which it was his turn to lead. Exclamations of dismay began to run back along the line of porters like fire on tarred string. I rushed up from the rear and, to my horror, found Tom at the bottom of a pit, with a wooden stake the thickness of my forearm protruding above the fleshy part of his thigh. We got him out, soused the wound

with permanganate of potash, tied it up with strips from his spare shirt, made a litter, abandoned the equipment, and started back to Macequece within the hour. Tom's leg was not going the way of Smith's if I could help it.

I drove those Negroes night and day, frantic with anxiety, taking one end of the litter when they flagged. There seemed a curse on our Ruenya project. Tom lay there in a semicoma, breathing heavily and jolting to the rough movement of the net of jungle creepers on which he lay, suspended from the pole above.

Thirty-six hours after the accident he was safe in hospital—that is if the dirty little Macequece hospital could be called safe. But at least he had a doctor, of sorts, and a supply of drugs. Smith had left already, I found, for Umtali in Rhodesia, where he had friends.

Tom's leg healed—permanganate is great stuff—but it was a couple of months before he was fit to travel again. I spent that time applying for and obtaining a concession which gave us exclusive mining rights on the Ruenya River, provided we kept up a rather stiff schedule of annual payments until such time as the property should be operated on a large scale. The concession was easy to get. There was no competition. Few white men had ever heard of such a river, practically none had ever seen it.

A third time we started for the Ruenya River, arrived, and began work. The gold values showed remarkably consistent in the series of new pits we now began to sink. We were both thoroughly convinced by now that we had a valuable and salable concession.

The rains were on again. The malaria season was at its height. We were both rotten with it anyway—everyone in Mozambique was. Sometimes together, sometimes

alternately, we began to go down with the shakes. Dosing ourselves with huge doses of quinine, we staggered out to work as soon as the shaking spasms had left us. It became a race between our stamina and the climate. Smith had said that a dozen more pits proved up would be sufficient evidence of the property's value if they averaged up to the first one we had dug together; and we would dig those dozen pits if they had to bury us in them.

One by one they went slowly downward to the water level. Panu's savages would not work except when the fit took them, which was seldom, so most of the pits we dug ourselves. Sometimes Tom, sometimes I stood in the bottom, shoveling the gravel into an eland-skin sack, which we used for lack of a bucket. When the sack was full the other turned the handle of our improvised windlass and wound the rope of native creeper onto the drum, until the sack came to the surface. This was dumped onto the growing pile, from which the gold would be washed and its weight estimated when the pit was done.

One day Tom could not get out of his bed of dried grass on the earthen floor of the rough lean-to which we had improvised as a shelter from the weather.

There was a dirty yellow look about his skin.

"It's bad, Pete. More than malaria this time," he gasped. "Pain across the kidneys, urine discolored, feels like blackwater to me."

"What does one do for it, Tom?" I was terrified. It was my first experience of this scourge of tropical Africa, but I knew its reputation. The possibility of Tom's going struck me with panic. I was only twenty then and had seen little of death by sickness, which is so much harder than death by battle.

"Nothing to do for blackwater, laddie. Don't try to get me to hospital; the movement would kill whatever chance I've got. Give me plenty of water to drink—champagne would be better—no specifics known—hospitals lose most cases—but I'm tough—maybe I'll weather it."

By night his skin was almost black, his urine the same color. He was writhing in agony from congested kidneys.

"Write to my people." He gave me an address. "Tell them I'm gone. They'll be glad to hear it. Leave you my share of the concession. You're all right. Good partner."

I buried him next day.

His death shook me badly. His short legs and my long ones had covered many hundreds of miles in company. He was the best trek companion I ever had in Mozambique. Discouraged, I abandoned the work which we had so nearly completed and trekked back alone to Macequece.

It took several weeks in Macequece hospital and enough quinine injections to embitter my body as well as my soul before I was fit enough to travel again.

GUNGUNYANA'S TREASURE

MANY singular legends were discussed at one time or another on Human's veranda, where discussions were apt to range to such extremes as the merits of the latest musical-comedy star (judged from the illustrated London papers), the origin of the Zimbabwe ruins, the authenticity of the Immaculate Conception, or the rival merits of Scotch and Irish whiskey. The story which always claimed my attention most was that of Gungunyana's treasure.

Gungunyana had reigned for many years over the Shangana tribe, whose domain began over a hundred miles to the south. Within the limits of circumstance he had been an Emperor Claudius in a small way and it had taken Portuguese machine guns to outwit him. The Shangana, like most of the fighting tribes, were of the adventurous Zulu stock. Not content with the peaceful life of agriculturists within their boundaries, they had been almost as famous among their weaker neighbors as the kindred Matabele for their woman-and-cattle-raiding propensities.

When the British occupation of Rhodesia had tabooed raiding in that direction, the Shangana youth had perforce to find some other means of acquiring wealth. Whereas they had previously acquired their wives by right of conquest, they must now buy their women. To gain the price of the wholesale matrimony which they affected, they began to emigrate in hundreds to the newly opened diamond and gold mines in South Africa, which were crying for labor.

A Shangana who left the country without the king's permission incurred the death penalty; and the king's permission was given only on the promise to bring tribute in the form of a diamond or a golden sovereign, as the case might be, on reëntering the homeland.

Thus in the course of a long reign King Gungunyana was supposed to have accumulated a hoard of great value. Rumor said that it had been buried with him when he died, not many years before. The legend had always seemed to me to have the ring of truth, although most of my friends regarded it as wild, to say the least.

After my return from the Ruenya I decided to investigate the story. I slipped out of Macequece without informing anyone of my destination. This was quite usual procedure when any of us had anything on which he thought too valuable to share, or which seemed so fantastic that he might be held to ridicule in case of failure.

I made my way to the king's kraal, where Gungunyana had once ruled in savage state and where his son Umbuti practiced a feeble imitation of that wily old warrior's tyranny.

It was easy for me to drop into the life of the Shangana and win their confidence, but, as I expected, my coming excited the king's curiosity and I was summoned to his presence. He was a youngish man and would have had the usual Zulu good looks if he had not already begun to run to fat.

"Bayete, O King." I spoke in Zulu, giving the royal salutation.

"Greetings, white man." His tone was surly. "What do you here in my kraal?"

"I rest before continuing my journey."

"Whither?"

I replied with a wave of my arm which implied a good portion of Mozambique.

"Why do you not live among your own people?"

"There is a little matter between me and the police."

"What kind of matter?" His tone began to be more friendly.

"A matter of guns. I did but oblige my friend Panu, of the Senas, with a few rifles . . ."

He laughed. "Those cursed police. Can you get me rifles?"

"Later, perhaps. When this business has been arranged. I have friends in high places among the Portuguese. While they arrange it . . ."

"You live in the bush," he finished for me with a laugh.

I felt that he believed the story. I looked the part of an outlaw—there were several of them living in the bush in Mozambique for similar offenses to the one which I had claimed. I had neither servants nor porters. I was bearded and ragged—lean from living off the bush during the two-hundred-mile tramp I had just accomplished.

Information on the late king's treasure was more easily acquired than I had dared to hope. I found that there were two people living who might be expected to have knowledge at least of its existence, even possibly as to its disposal when the old king had died.

One of these was a counselor of Gungunyana, the other was one of Gungunyana's widows who had been so old and ugly at the time of her husband's death that she had had no salable value and had therefore been allowed to live on alone, according to custom, a pensioner on the new king's bounty. It was essential that I should win the confidence of at least one of these survivors of

the old regime if I was to get the information I required.

I was desperately anxious to make a success of my lone venture for more than one reason. First, I didn't want to be laughed out of Macequece like Freddie Green or Zambezi Jack. Young Freddie Green had disappeared quietly from our midst after a local Macequece native, superficially disguised as a Sena cannibal from the Zambezi, had sold him several pounds of brass filings for the price of gold. Zambezi Jack—none of us imagined then that he would call himself Trader Horn and write a best seller—had left for pastures new after someone had anointed his head with strawberry jam while he lay in a drunken sleep on Human's veranda. It attracted all the flies in Macequece. Jack hadn't noticed the trick when he awakened to meet the Beira train and had paraded the station platform with a buzzing halo round his head, to the delectation of all and sundry.

Second, I now had had three failures: Namib diamonds, elephant hunting, and the Rucnya gold venture. I needed a success to restore my self-respect.

I decided to tackle the widow in preference to the counselor. She had been for years Gungunyana's head wife, and therefore the sharer of his hut. It seemed reasonable that Gungunyana would have kept his treasure somewhere in the hut under his eye. If that were so she ought to know more about it than anyone else.

I cast my mind back to my early days among the Zulus to find what would be most attractive to a withered old hag, whose chief pleasure seemed to be sitting in the sun before her hut and scratching vermin impartially with hand or foot. The nights were chilly at that altitude, although the days were hot, as Umbuti's kraal was situated well toward the top of the Rhodesian escarp-

ment—the “Falling of the Plains,” the Shangana called the great drop-off between high and low veld, which was a geological continuation of our own Drakensberg Mountains farther south. I decided that a *kaross*, or skin robe, would be the thing to win her shriveled old heart.

I obtained one by the simple expedient of shooting enough civet cats to make two karosses and trading half the skins to the tribal tanner in exchange for tanning and sewing the remaining half. Civet cats were as plentiful in the forest as squirrels in Central Park and raised Cain with the tribal chickens.

It was a pretty-looking thing, with its soft gray fur and longitudinal black stripes, as I held it draped over my arm when I approached the old lady. I have seen worse furs worn on Fifth Avenue since then.

“Aie-e-e-e, the beautiful thing,” screamed the old dame, fingering the fur lovingly. “Had I such a kaross my old bones would rest easier in the night than they have since my lord Gungunyana was buried in the lion-skin kaross which I shared with him as his chief wife.”

“Try it, wife of a king,” I suggested.

She draped it over her skinny form and looked like the mummy of an Eskimo.

“For whom is it, white man?” she asked. “It is fit for a king’s daughter—or even for the wife of a king. An old woman whose bones are cold would give much for such a thing.”

“It is for a service.”

“If I can give the service, the kaross is mine.”

“Tell me a story truly and promise by your Snake that none shall know that you have told it to me—and the gift is yours.”

“By my Snake I promise.”

"It is the story of Gungunyana's death I want."

"Or his diamonds, perhaps." She looked at me shrewdly. Then, seeing from my face that she had hit the mark, she added, "Fear not, white man. None shall know. Better that you should find them and I wear the kaross than that they should go to fatten the hyena who uses the lion's lair. But be cautious. Umbuti would give his spear hand to grasp them. If he thought you were searching for them . . ." She made a dramatic gesture with her hand, imitating the downward thrust of a spear as it enters the belly.

"Have you seen them, then?" I asked.

"Ay. Many times—the gold too. Gungunyana kept them in a cowhide bag which lay against the wall of our hut near his sleeping mat. There were golden pieces more in number than the king's cattle, each with a picture of a man on one side, with a beard [Paul Kruger]. There were diamonds to fill the measure of the king's cupped hands three times."

"Where is it hidden?"

"With the king. When the witch doctors came to bear his body forth to burial one of them carried the cowhide bag." She mentioned the witch doctor's name and even gave particulars of his dress.

"Where is the king buried?"

"That is what Umbuti would like to know. For long after his accession he kept soldiers searching for the burial place. But none could find it."

"How could it be so well hidden? Surely the witch doctors who buried him could tell."

"The king was wise, white man. When he felt death upon him he called the captain of his guard and talked with him secretly. When the witch doctors returned from burying the king they were set upon by the guard

and killed before they could speak with any of the people."

I gave her the kaross and she immediately forgot me, huddling her ancient body in its softness and stroking it with her withered hand.

I would never see that treasure, I realized, even though I had proved conclusively to my own satisfaction that it existed. The old king had outwitted me from his grave, as he had outwitted many a foe in his lifetime. Somewhere in that maze of rocky hills lies the skeleton of Gungunyana, beside him a rotting cowhide bag of gold and diamonds. To search for his burial place openly would be certain death, although I should have had a sporting chance of getting clear if I could have obtained a clue to the cache. I could almost hear a dry chuckle come wafting down the valley toward me.

I paid my respects to Umbuti before leaving. He scowled on me till he heard I was quitting the country. Then his manner suddenly became genial. It occurred to me that his suspicions had become aroused and that my failure to find a clue had probably saved my life.

HAIRY HOOLIGANS

I WAS too discouraged to return northward immediately when I left Umbuti's kraal. Instead I struck south along the escarpment. The country seemed unpopulated, except for baboons, which were plentiful enough. They were the big, yellow, tropical chaps, larger even than the brown ones I had hunted in the Drakensberg. For some days I lived solely by my rifle, without the change of diet which the native gardens of more popular regions usually afforded when traveling alone, without supplies.

It was the hottest of hot days when, from a ridge, I finally spotted a Shangana kraal in the valley below. I was dry, and visions of cool Shangana beer suddenly made my throat almost writhe with impatience. I went down the slope at a great pace, losing sight of the village as I dropped into the timber of a valley bottom.

The kraal was out of sight now, but not out of hearing. From its direction there suddenly arose a great screaming and cursing of hysterical women. I unlimbered my rifle as I ran forward, quite prepared to meet one of the numerous leopards whose spoor had been plentiful on the trail, and burst suddenly out of the thicket into the open space among the huts.

The Shangana women had been winnowing their newly reaped millet by the primitive method of tossing a dish of grain skyward and letting the wind blow away the chaff. Heaps of grain lay here and there, abandoned, while the women screamed imprecations from inside the nearest hut. Hundreds of great yellow apes

swarmed among the grain piles, just like a hairy mob of overgrown children who had seen a year's supply of candy suddenly laid out before them. They scooped up handfuls and gobbled them. They rushed from pile to pile, chasing off their fellows. They shrieked their ecstatic excitement so as almost to drown the cries of the women near-by. In the hot, confined space between the huts their musty odor hung heavy, like the inside of a monkey cage at the zoo.

They did not even notice me in their excitement, although I was right among them, until I emptied my magazine at point-blank range. I dropped half a dozen of them before they disappeared into the bush, barking their indignation.

Out of the hut a score of incensed women came tumbling over one another in their eagerness to assess the damage. They were around me in a moment, pawing me in gratitude and trying all together to tell me the tale of the iniquities of their recent visitors. They spat fiercely on the hairy bodies which lay around, before dragging them into the huts.

"Where are your men?" I shouted, trying to make myself heard above their clamor.

They all tried to answer at once and it was not till the excitement had subsided somewhat and I was seated in the shade of a hut with a pot of beer before me that I got the story straight. Then I gathered that they were all wives or daughters of a petty chief called Ufana. The baboons had suddenly descended on them while Ufana and his sons were celebrating the harvest, beer drinking at a neighboring kraal.

They treated me as a conquering hero and plied me with beer, grilled strips of goat's meat, curds, and a

stew in which field mice and big green caterpillars played a prominent part.

Not long after the men of the village arrived.

Ufana was a fine, upstanding savage whose appearance gave evidence of his Zulu ancestry. I had heard of him in Umbuti's kraal. He was a son of Gungunyana himself by one of his lesser wives. He was full of indignation against the baboons and of gratitude for my rescue of his women.

"After they had eaten the grain they would have raped the women and bred a crop of hairy bastards," he remarked as we took turns at the drinking calabash.

"But monkey cannot breed with man," I retorted.

He told me a story of a native woman who had been kidnaped by baboons and kept captive for years, to be followed to the village by a family of missing links when she was finally rescued. I had heard the legend before and was to hear it again many times. It seems prevalent among all the tribes who inhabit the broken, baboon-infested country of the escarpment, in all its six hundred miles' length between the Zambezi and the Sabi Rivers.

I stayed some weeks with Ufana. I had been living a somewhat hair-trigger kind of existence at Umbuti's. It was good to be able to relax among friends for a while.

During my stay I had plenty more evidence of the boldness of the males in the local colony of baboons, and of their intelligence.

They very evidently could discriminate between the human sexes. If native women went abroad accompanied by men, the baboons would keep their distance on the high ridges. But I have seen them come down to within a few yards of women who were unaccompanied by men.

They would bark boldly and make indecent gestures at these unprotected females.

The women were terrified, with reason. The men were desperate. They had no means of retaliation as the baboons were too wily to come within reach of their primitive weapons. Ufana even talked of moving his village down onto the plains of the low veld, where the climate was less healthy and the land less fertile, but where at least his people would be free from the hairy pests which made their lives a nightmare.

One day a youth dragged home in triumph a live baboon, a rare event, as they were too canny to trap. He had stunned it by a lucky shot with his throwing stick and tied it securely before it recovered consciousness.

"What will you do with him, Ufana?" I asked.

"The stake," he decreed after a moment's thought.

The stake was an old Zulu torture, a favorite of Chaka's. A hardwood stake was buried point upward in the ground. The victim was trussed like a fowl, lifted and set upon the stake so that the point penetrated the rectum. Each agonized contortion drove the stake a little deeper. Between one and three days usually ensued before death.

But I had a better idea. I remembered having been told by an old Boer in the Transvaal that he had chased away a colony of baboons by capturing one alive, clipping the long hair of the body, painting it with red and white streaks, and turning it loose to terrify its fellows.

"Listen, Ufana, to the white man's wisdom," I said. "It may be that by freeing this baboon we can drive the others away."

He grunted his dissent. "If it were flesh we would eat it. If it were human we would set it free. As it is pure

devil we will kill it slowly that the other devils in the hills may hear its cries and be afraid."

"But if you could free it among its fellows after so changing it that they would be afraid and run forever before it?"

"How can that be done?" he asked with sudden interest.

I told him the story.

"But our only paint is clay. The rain would wash off the clay and the devil return to plague us," he objected.

My eyes fell on the skin of a leopard which had been killed the day before.

"Fasten the leopard skin on him."

"How?" he asked.

"Nay, Ufana. That is for the black man's wisdom to determine," I laughed.

They fastened the leopard skin on by the simple expedient of sewing it into the skin of the live baboon, with the seam at the back where he could not reach it. The women sewed in imprecations with each stitch of the gut which they used for thread, jerking their wooden needles savagely with every curse. It was hard on the baboon and he objected with yells which brought his fellows clustering and shouting back on the near-by heights.

When it was done his appearance would have frightened Noah himself. Two hairy arms, two hairy legs, and a villainous-looking head were all that protruded from the spotted skin of the most implacable enemy the monkey tribes know. Dante himself could never have imagined him.

The moment he was released he bounded up the slope, barking excited greetings to his friends above, who answered him with a chorus of welcoming barks. Then the

apparition burst among them. They fled in every direction with howls of dismay, he after them.

For several days his chase must have lasted. At intervals we would hear his joyful barks as he spotted a group of friends and sped toward them. Then the explosion of shrieking as they stampeded in terror at the sight of him.

After that there was silence among the rocky hills as far as the baboons were concerned—at any rate for the time being.

THE WHITE CHIEF

SOUTHEAST of Ufana's was a stretch of country which appeared as a blank space on the map of Mozambique, with the exception of a dotted line. This line represented the cartographer's guess at the location of the upper reaches of the Busi River, one of the four big rivers of the country, but which had only been explored from its mouth near Beira as far as had been practicable in dugout canoes.

Ufana could tell me little of this country except that it had been frequently traversed by Shangana raiders of Gungunyana's time and that a white man was rumored to be the chief of a small tribe somewhere in it.

I agreed heartily when Ufana offered to accompany me in a journey of exploration through it. The presence of one of the family of the once-dreaded Gungunyana would insure a polite reception everywhere, he explained. I accepted his offer for a different reason, however—because I liked him and he would be company on the journey. I did not need Ufana to insure me a welcome. Savages are the most friendly people on earth in my experience, when they are handled in a reasonable manner.

We traveled along the top of the escarpment for a few days and then struck eastward, following the line of least resistance of the country, which was represented as usual by a stream. Three days more of travel had seen the stream grow into a small river, which made a fine series of falls in its last leap downward to the plains, now visible like a great black carpet at our feet, some hundreds of feet below. To our amazement we could see

white tents set up beside the river below the falls. A little later I was being welcomed by two Australian surveyors, Taylor and Watson.

"What are you fellows after?" I asked as soon as I had got over my wonder at the delicious taste of whiskey and soda, after some months of Shangana beer as sole tipple.

"We're mapping the course of the Busi River, but we've got to turn back here or the rains will catch us before we reach navigable water."

"How did you get here?"

"Traveled upstream from Beira by launch, then trekked along the bank."

"But is this the Busi?" I was surprised. I knew the river only by the local native name.

"It is, by golly," they chorused. "We ought to know. It's never been out of our sight since Beira."

Fortunately I had long since acquired the habit of making notes of my journeys and supplementing them by a sketch map in my pocket notebook, with the bearings given by my pocket compass. I gave them my map of the upper river, which I had traveled from its birth on the top of the escarpment, in complete ignorance that it was the Busi, and thus enabled them to complete their job with reasonable accuracy. Years afterward I ran across their map and found that the falls at the place of our meeting were named after me.

They were in a hurry to leave and were gone by the next day. At the same time Ufana and I struck southward from their camp in search of the white chief, whom we found without difficulty a few days later.

He was a distinguished-looking figure with white hair which he wore long, although his face was scrupulously

shaven. His head reminded me of the pictures of God in some of the old Boer bibles I had seen, without the beard. His dress was the native limbo, or cotton loincloth, but he was unmistakably English.

His village was a collection of huts, well situated on the slope of a small hill which looked eastward across the bush-covered plains. It was clean and tidy, a contrast to most native villages.

"It is good to see a white man; you are the first I have seen since I came here," he remarked in English which was rusty with disuse.

"How long have you been here?" I asked, as I gulped native beer out of a calabash.

"About twenty years," he replied after a somewhat long mental calculation. "I came out here to be alone and I built my hut on this slope to get the view. It was soon after the Shangana raiding had been put a stop to. All the tribes hercabouts had been decimated and reduced to small colonies who lived in the caves among the rocky kopjes where they could hide. They did not dare to cultivate. The sight of a field of corn might have brought a passing Shangana raiding party down on them. When game was scarce they starved and ate one another.

"Once by one families began to come and build beside me, after I had assured them that Gungunyana had been killed by the Portuguese and would never raid again."

I did not ask his real name. The natives called him simply *Baba*—father.

Next day I stood on the veranda of the hut which he had allotted me and watched the sun rise over the bushveld—a great flaming ball of gold and crimson which seemed to roll across the plains toward me, before it tore itself clear of the horizon and leapt upward on its course.

"When I see that I believe again that it was worth it," Baba remarked from beside me.

"Worth what?" I asked.

"Coming here," he replied curtly in a tone which discouraged further curiosity.

He held in his hand a razor, the old-fashioned kind. On a stump near-by his shaving kit was neatly laid out.

"Nana," he called suddenly. "Nana."

An ancient, naked hag appeared. Two long, wrinkled breasts dangled to her waistline. They seemed like empty, shriveled, rubber tubes which swayed raspingly against her belly as she walked. She stood before him, expectant, a smile of delighted anticipation displaying withered gums from which the teeth had long since rotted.

He reached forward and caught one of her breasts by the nipple, pulling it toward him till the skin stretched smooth. With the skill of long practice he rapidly stropped his razor on it.

"You should try this, my boy," he chuckled. "My own invention. There's nothing like human skin to put a good edge on a razor."

"That's what I use her for," he remarked as he turned to his shaving and she scuttled away giggling.

Ufana and I were escorted half a day's march toward the Sabi River, southward still, by six stalwart half-caste sons of our host, a mere sample of what he had raised from his harem of a dozen native wives.

I never did solve the mystery of his exile. There was still an undefinable something about him—mostly in his tidy habits and the set of his shoulders, I think—which suggested a noncommissioned officer of the British Regulars. He did not look the type which would desert. My guess would be that he was an ex-sergeant who had got

into trouble of some kind after his discharge and had to skip the country. As to why he had chosen for his exile such a country as the Mozambique of twenty years before, I would not even hazard a guess.

CHAMPAGNE AND BLACKWATER

UFANA and I were on the Sabi River in a few days and found the buffalo herds as large as had been reported. Elephant spoor was fairly plentiful there, too. However, I was not there for either buffalo or elephant—I wanted no more of the latter, anyway—but to satisfy a longing to traverse one of the few blank spaces left on the map of Africa.

We wandered slowly down the Sabi River, shooting only for the pot, although the Australians had replenished my store of ammunition for me. Record heads of sable antelope and kudu abounded, but record heads remain unrecorded when there is no means of getting them five hundred miles to civilization.

It was among the little fishing tribes on the Sabi River banks that I first became acquainted with totem worship. Each little community had its totem animal which was sacred. One group who entertained us worshiped the monkey, another the leopard, and a third the crocodile.

"These men are fools," remarked Ufana who, like all Zulus, believed that the spirits of his ancestors took the form of snakes. "How can the monkey be the ghost of man when his flesh is good to eat? Or the leopard, who eats man's flesh? Thus would all men be eaters of men. The man who ate the flesh of monkey would be eating his own fathers, while the leopard who ate men might be devouring his own children. It is not natural."

I noticed nothing unusual about the people of the monkey, nor the people of the leopard, unless it was that they feared the crocodile even more than most tribes. It

was a fact that the Sabi River was more full than most tropical rivers of this curse. We observed that no woman even dared to approach the river to draw water without an armed warrior at her side, spear poised to protect her if a lurking crocodile should make a dash as she dipped her gourd. In every village we were given the tally of recent victims.

But, to my astonishment, the people of the crocodile clan seemed to have no fear at all of the lurking horror which was their totem. There were apparently just as many crocodiles here as anywhere. They could be seen sunning themselves in rows on the sandbanks, their mouths open to let the birds pick their teeth. And yet the natives of the clan swam boldly, catching fish under water with a small net shaped like a butterfly net.

When we asked them for an explanation, they replied quite simply that they worshiped the crocodile and therefore no crocodile would hurt them unless they first harmed a crocodile. This was sound logic from their point of view, but not from mine. Still it was the only explanation I ever got from them.

It may be that fish were so plentiful that the crocodiles were always full—the river literally swarmed with fish thereabouts. It may be also that their witch doctors knew of some substance which was distasteful to the crocodiles and anointed the tribe with it at the secret religious rites which they seemed to celebrate every few nights out in the bush. If that were so it would have to be something very strong to put a crocodile off his feed.

We left the Sabi finally and turned northward toward Macequece with the rains in full swing. Ufana was to return with me to see the wonders of civilization. I had frequently tried to explain to him the appearance and performance of a train, but without success. He was ex-

tremely intelligent, but had no criterion on which to base a mental picture.

About halfway back, after two weeks of extremely heavy traveling, we heard rumors from the villagers of another white man in the vicinity. I turned aside to find him—a day's march more or less made little difference.

The white man proved to be Dawes, Director of Agriculture for Mozambique, whom I already knew slightly.

Dawes was an ardent botanist and had ample private means to follow his hobby. As he was an extremely able man, he was in great demand by tropical countries which wished to develop their agricultural possibilities. He had been Director of Agriculture both of Uganda and British East Africa (later to be known as Kenya Colony). He always spent a great deal of his time on trek, looking for new botanical varieties.

On this occasion he welcomed me like a long-lost debtor. He had just discovered a new variety of plant and wanted to tell someone about it. I was a section of his public fallen from heaven and he made the most of me.

He called his houseboy—he always traveled de luxe. No bivvies in the bush for Morely Thomas Dawes. It took several hundred porters to carry his kit when he went on trek.

"Bring champagne for the guest," he cried.

"Champagne finished, massa."

"Well, send for some, then."

"But, massa . . ."

"Damn it, do as you're told and don't argue. Send for a case of champagne—Cliquot—none of that sweet German stuff because it's cheaper."

"Yes, massa."

"Where on earth are you going to find champagne?"

I asked, after I had seen a runner set off into the bush at a dogtrot, the letter which carried the order held in a cleft stick and wrapped with oilcloth to keep it dry.

"Macequece, of course. Where else can you get champagne in this damned place?"

"But Macequece is ten days' trek away."

"What of it? You're in no hurry, are you?"

I wasn't. That cook tent of his was giving off a fragrance like the kitchen of the Ritz.

I put some fat on my ribs during the month that I stayed with him. He dressed for dinner every night—smoking jacket, boiled shirt, and all, the only Englishman I ever met who lived up to the legend. His one concession to the climate was a pair of mosquito boots. Dawes was "sahib" all through. He never let me feel that my rags profaned his formal dress and spotlessly appointed table.

But he did have one uncomfortable trait as a trek companion. A terrific commotion in camp woke me in the middle of one night. Dawes was out in the rain in his pyjamas—he hadn't even put on his raincoat—shouting orders to the scores of porters who were busy breaking camp by the light of carbide flares.

"What in the name of God are you up to, Dawes?" I cried in consternation. "You surely aren't going to try to trek at night with a camp of this size. Besides, it's raining and all your kit will get wet."

Dawes looked at me wildly. I wondered for a second if he had been drinking.

"Sorry, we're moving on a bit," he said, then rushed excitedly away to hurry a group of porters who were dismantling the tent from which I had just emerged.

"It is the madness, *Bwana*," said a calm voice behind me. I turned to see Dawes's Swahili headman, his tower-

ing turban and flowing robes looking slightly bedraggled from the rain.

"The Bwana Dawes was once bewitched by an elephant," he explained. "Now he is condemned to move forever before the elephant tribe whenever they appear. An hour ago the elephants trumpeted their warning from the pool in the river where they come to play at night. The Bwana Dawes heard, now he obeys."

I remembered hearing the elephants squealing and trumpeting from the drinking place in the river just as I awoke.

"How far will he move?" I asked.

"In one or two hours the madness will leave him; then he will camp."

"Tell me how he was bewitched."

"If the Bwana will march beside me in my place at the rear of the column I will tell; now I cannot," he too rushed off to superintend the work.

"Thou must know that the Bwana Dawes is no coward," he began a little later as we floundered through the mud, the long column of laden porters, visible by the flares which each tenth man carried, looking like the parody of some torchlight procession—only no one could imagine a torchlight procession on such a night. "The man who says my Bwana is a coward lies. I was his gunbearer in British East Africa and in Uganda too—and who should better judge the courage of a man than he who bears his spare rifle and stands one pace to the right rear when the game charges, ready to place the loaded rifle in the hand which reaches back if the first shot fails to kill?"

"It was in Uganda that it happened, on the slopes of the great snow mountains which reach upward to the

moon,¹ in the bamboo forest. The Bwana had just made me headman, as I still am today, and a new gunbearer walked behind him on the tracks of a rogue elephant, a destroyer of villages, whom my Bwana had come to that place to kill. My heart was sad as I watched them leave the camp, in spite of my pride in the honor done me. A rogue elephant is the most dangerous of all things and I doubted the new gunbearer—of the cursed Baganda tribe." He spat into the mud expressively.

"It was many hours later that they returned to camp, gunbearer and all, but without my Bwana. I got the tale from the porters. The gunbearer I beat till he fainted, with the handle of the whip which is the sign of my authority, for I thought my Bwana dead, and it is the pride of a good gunbearer to die with the man whose life he often holds in the hand which carries the spare rifle.

"They had found the rogue elephant in thick bamboo. He had charged them before my Bwana had time to change the light rifle which he carried for the big Express the gunbearer bore behind him. My Bwana tried the frontal shot with the light rifle—to stop a charging elephant with a .303 bullet is like stopping a river flood with a drinking calabash.

"The rogue caught my Bwana with his trunk and flung him into a bamboo thicket, then, blinded luckily by the shot, raged through the thick bamboo, searching, to trample the body. Hast thou ever seen a man who was trampled by an elephant?"

"No." I shuddered.

"It is not good to see. The elephant tramples with his

¹ Ruenzori Mountains.

forefeet like a woman kneading dough, till the body is spread upon the ground like a blanket.

"The porters fled, as porters do, the gunbearer with them, carrying the Express rifle—the cowardly dog.

"When I reached the spot, many hours later, I saw the elephant still raging through the bamboo, trumpeting, and feeling, feeling among the bamboo thickets.

"I shot him with the Express; it was easy because he was quite blind. Then I found my Bwana, who had crawled some distance from the spot with a broken leg. He had the fire of madness in his eyes and was sick for many weeks before he could walk again. Since then he is bewitched, as you have seen tonight."

Dawes called me into his tent as soon as we had camped.

"Sorry," he remarked apologetically as he squirted soda from a syphon. "I'm afraid of elephants."

"Don't apologize," I replied. "I've heard the story. Don't blame you for giving them the right of way. Besides I'm afraid of them too, with less reason."

Soon after Ufana and I left Dawes's camp I began to feel a pain in my back and an aching in my joints, sure warning of one of the bouts of malaria which were becoming recurrent with me. We were traveling even lighter than usual, most of the porters which Ufana had supplied having returned home from Dawes's camp.

I kept marching as long as possible; it seemed a pity to have to lie up with Macequece only a few days ahead. However, it was not long before I reached the limit of my endurance and I decided to camp for a day or two until I felt better.

The next morning I knew the worst. My head was splitting, my urine the color of port wine, and my skin a dark yellow hue. It was blackwater fever without the

shadow of a doubt—the scourge which had been the end of Tom and which each year decimated the ranks of my friends.

My first impulse was to tell Ufana to have a litter built to carry me to hospital—we had just about enough boys to do it. Then I remembered what poor Tom had told me on the Ruenya River.

“When you go down with blackwater, don’t panic. Don’t try to get yourself carried into hospital—the movement will kill you. Your only chance is to stick it out where you are. Lie still and pour liquid down your throat to keep your kidneys flushed and stop clots forming.”

I could feel myself becoming delirious, so I gave Ufana his instructions as best I could.

“Build a grass hut—force me to drink every two hours—take from the stock of meal which is the porters’ ration, boil porridge, wrap in limbo cloth, and place upon my back over the kidneys, hot. When it cools place another hot plaster in its place. Do this day and night until I am dead or until I tell you to stop.”

“My father’s spirit begins even now to wander in the darkness. What if it should call to me to stop from where it visits with the ghosts?” asked the literal-minded savage.

“Judge, Ufana, if I be sane or mad. If, in my madness, I order you to stop, pay no heed.” I thought that the continued poulticing over my congested kidneys must be helpful, although I had never heard of its being tried.

That is all I remember for a while. I came to myself lying on my face on a bundle of dry grass in a small thatched hut. I was so weak that I could barely move at all. But my head was clear. I believed that I had suc-

cessfully passed the first danger stage and that my kidneys had ceased to be congested. At any rate the grinding pain in them had gone. In its stead was an acute soreness across the small of my back which I could not account for.

With considerable effort I got one hand behind me and could feel that I was one huge blister from shoulder blades to buttocks.

At my movement there was a pleased grunt from a dark corner and Ufana was at my side with one long stride.

"What have you done to me, Ufana?" I asked querulously.

"I followed my father's orders," he answered, in tones which he tried to make matter of fact, but in which pride and satisfaction strove for mastery. "My father told me to place the porters' hot ration on his back continuously. I did so. When my father's spirit cried in agony for me to cease, from where it wandered with the ghosts, I paid no heed. For two days and a night I held the hotness on you until sleep caused me to fall across your body. Since then a porter has taken turns with me that your orders be obeyed."

"But how long have I lain here?" I cried. It had seemed a few hours at the most.

"Five days and five nights," was the astounding reply.

I believe to this day that I owe my life to Ufana. That Zulu stock is hard to beat for sterling qualities.

The second stage of blackwater is almost as dangerous as the first. The loss of blood through the kidneys has been terrific and many seemingly convalescent patients collapse suddenly. I got through that stage successfully, thanks to a constitution whose natural tough-

ness had been considerably augmented by my experiences of the last few years.

For two weeks more I lay on my grassy bed, while the rain dripped from the eaves and Ufana fed me with gruel. We had nothing left but the corn meal and even that was running short. Ufana told me that he had fed my poultices to the porters when he discarded them.

Ufana or one of the porters was continually scouring the bush with my rifle, but the big-game herds seemed to have changed their grazing grounds for a time. There was small game about but the natives couldn't have hit the side of a house with a rifle, let alone anything so active as the smaller species of antelope.

"Do you know that you have had blackwater fever?" asked the Portuguese doctor who examined me after my arrival in Macequecc hospital. "Who nursed you?"

I told him the experience.

"Sacred Virgin," he cried. "Here in hospital I lose eighty per cent of my blackwater patients. But you lie on the wet ground and recover. There is only one way to kill a South African. That is with an axe."

A HOSPITAL, A POLICEMAN,
AND A JAIL

THERE had been a story current that the Macequece hospital owned a coffin with a false bottom through which the corpse was dumped into the grave, the coffin being available again for the next victim. I cannot vouch for the truth of that, although I am prepared to believe anything bad about the Macequece hospital of the early days. It was true, however, that we regarded the hospital as only one degree less dangerous than taking our chances out in the bush at the mercy of the ignorance of our boys.

The state of affairs had become such a scandal that public opinion had forced a change during my absence. The old Portuguese doctor had gone into the discard, and with him his male nurses. A new Portuguese doctor had come, fresh from some Lisbon hospital—and ordered a South African nurse from Capetown.

She was a little girl and looked very prim in her starched uniform. She brought a breath of home to me, with her queer Cape English, when she ordered my bearers to set my litter “by the stoep so long,” while she had my bed prepared. By normal standards she was no beauty, I suppose. But I had not seen a white woman of her kind for years; to me she seemed the most beautiful thing ever made.

I heaved a sigh of relief as her capable hands settled me into a real bed, with springs and sheets. I had dreaded entering that place of evil reputation, but there had been nowhere else for me to go, as I was still

far from out of danger. I relaxed. Now I knew I should recover.

But the little nurse was a martinet. She ran that hospital and didn't care who knew it. Our wills clashed almost at once.

She brought me a purge.

"Drink it," she ordered curtly.

"Damned if I will," was my reply. I had a grouse on, born of my reaction to safety and comfort. Any bag of skin and bones was entitled to his grouse, I felt, after being carried for a week with the rough fibers of a litter rubbing against a back that was raw with blisters.

She took it away without a word and I preened myself on my victory. She was back in a moment with a quart bottle and a glass.

"Have some lemonade then," she coaxed me sweetly.

I drank a glassful with gusto. She set the bottle on the table and went into the next ward.

"One glassful is enough for you; don't you dare to drink any more," she cautioned.

She was hardly out of the door before I had that bottle. It was empty in a moment. She took it away without a word when she returned, but I mistrusted the gleam in her eye and began to have doubts as to the wisdom of my action. Within the hour my doubts had turned to certainty. I had had my lesson in the wiles of women. I was a wiser, if an emptier man.

We were all afraid of Nurse at first, but we found that she was just as lonely as we were. Tea on the hospital veranda became quite a recognized institution. We all proposed to her at every opportunity and a rejected suitor was just as welcome at the tea table as one who had not yet tried his luck. She would have none of us, however, and eventually married the manager of the lo-

cal bank. This was later; there was no bank in Maceque in the lean years of which I write.

When I left the hospital I went to Beira for some sea air and a rest. Beira was a queer little town of white-washed buildings, tin roofs, ugly warehouses, and blazing flowers, set behind its sea wall in ankle-deep sand, with the Busi River flowing quietly near-by. Its bid for a place in history was based on the fact that it was the seaport for the fast-developing Rhodesian hinterland and that it vied with Port Said for the reputation of being the wickedest town in Africa.

It was a town without cabs, carriages, automobiles, or rickshas. The sand prohibited anything on wheels, except the tiny narrow-gauge railway which ran along the center of the main street. Such citizens as could afford the luxury owned their own little push cars which ran on the rails, propelled by cook, houseboy, or gardener, as the case might be. When two cars met the one coming downhill was lifted bodily from the rails while the upbound car went by.

While I was there a British gunboat dropped anchor offshore and gave shore leave to some of the crew. Before the first leave boat was well under way from the ship, the little Portuguese police were herded into barracks and locked in till the sailors were once more back on board.

It seemed that on a previous similar occasion a roving British tar on shore leave had been looking for the diversion which half-a-dozen quarts of beer had told him that he craved. He met a miniature policeman somewhere back of the sea wall. The policeman's sword was half as long as the man who bore it and appealed to Jack Tar as a souvenir. Jack grabbed the bearer, laid

him gently on his tummy, and proceeded to unbuckle the sword belt. A frantic whistling from the prostrate victim brought another undersized warrior to the rescue. He too was gently caught in a pair of big hands and neatly laid across the first. More policemen came running and were added to the heap. The leave boat near-by whistled its last warning and Jack caught it on the run with half-a-dozen souvenirs under his arm. The police were always locked in barracks after that while British sailors were on shore leave, for fear that souvenir hunting might become a craze with the navy.

Beira was certainly a change after my experiences, but as a place of rest it proved a rank failure.

During the week that I stayed there I was an innocent participant in two bar fights. The procedure of these affairs seemed to have become standardized by their frequency. Someone would start a row, someone would smash the light with a bottle, and the melee would become general in the darkness, until there was a stampede on the arrival of the police. On both occasions I occupied a corner, holding a chair by the back and prodding outward with the legs at everyone who came within range, until I saw my chance to break for a window.

One morning I took my usual stand in front of the Queen's Hotel bar for my eleven o'clock drink. It was the first drink of the day because there was a convention in Beira that no one drank in the mornings, although thirst had apparently triumphed over propriety to the extent of having the mornings end an hour early. Everyone had their first drink at eleven sharp.

"By Christ, Pete Rainier, I heard you were dead," bellowed a great voice almost in my ear, and a hand as big as a leg of mutton grasped me by the shoulder till I

wincing. I turned to see the towering bulk of "Big Hughes," whose chief bids for fame among us were the violence of his periodic busts and the fact that he had once killed a leopard with his bare hands.

A little policeman now lined up against the bar for his morning vino tinto. He looked like a stumpy mushroom under his big helmet, which hardly reached above the waist of the human mastodon beside him.

Hughes looked down at him earnestly, turned to me, and made a gesture as though he were crushing an insect between thumb and fingernail.

I shook my head at him warningly.

But Hughes on the rampage was as hard to discourage as a hippo in a cornfield.

"How the hell are you, mate?" he bellowed suddenly, smiting the Portugese a playful pat on the top of his head which drove his helmet down over his ears.

"Haw, haw, haw," he roared, rocking in gargantuan mirth, as the midget beside him danced around frantically, heaving vainly upward with both hands on the brim of his helmet to get it clear of his eyes.

"Don't be a damned fool, Hughes," I remonstrated, stepping toward the victim with the idea of helping him. "You'll land in jail if you play those tricks here. This isn't Macequece."

Suddenly the policeman ceased his struggles, drew a whistle, and blew it frantically.

Undersized representatives of the law seemed to materialize on the run from all directions. In a moment the bar was full of them. Before I could recover from my surprise, two of them had my arms behind me and I heard the handcuffs click on my wrists. Hughes looked like showing fight, but a menacing gesture from the bar-

man, who held an empty bottle by the neck, convinced him of the futility of resistance.

They marched us through the blazing streets to jail, pushed us into a cell, took the irons off our wrists, and left us.

It was a bare room, built of sun-dried brick, with a raised shelf of the same material along one wall as its only furniture. It was tremulous with vermin. We gazed at one another helplessly. Where the sunlight struck through a narrow window onto the wall the lighted patch could be seen creeping with insect life.

"Christ, I hope we get taken to the judge to give us our medicine soon," groaned Hughes.

"It's Sunday, you fool. No court till tomorrow. We're here for the night," I snapped.

"Good day, Senhores," came a smooth voice from behind us as the jailer appeared, rubbing his hands and bowing profoundly. "This place has been lonely. For a week I have had no guests. It is an honor to serve such distinguished gentlemen."

"Honor be b—d," growled Hughes. "The only honor I want is to get out of this blasted menagerie."

"We are your guests," I placated. "But we are not alone in the cell as you may observe." I made a gesture toward a small brown insect which moved on the wall near the newcomer's shoulder.

He moved hastily away from the wall before he replied.

"It is to be regretted that there is no other room," he apologized. "But I came to see about your food. In our Portuguese jails it is unfortunate that we have no arrangements to feed our guests. I can arrange with some hotel to have your meals sent in."

"God, what happens to a poor devil with no money?" cried Hughes, astounded.

"He starves," I replied curtly.

"I'll not starve, by God," he cried and dragged from his trouser pocket a roll of bills.

A glitter appeared in the little jailer's eyes.

"Look, Senhor," I pleaded in my best Portuguese. "It is Sunday and there will be no court until tomorrow. Will not the Senhor be our guest at the hotel until tomorrow? We give our word that we will not try to escape. How could we escape, even if we tried? There is no train till Tuesday."

After some discussion he agreed, stipulating that he was to be allowed to handcuff us together when we went to bed.

Next morning Hughes learned the fallacy of carrying all his wealth in his pockets in Portuguese territory. The judge fined us the exact amount of the cash we had on us.

"GENTLEMEN RANKERS OUT ON THE SPREE"

WE had our remittance man in Maccquece. Dick was his first name and the one by which we knew him. One name was enough for most of us. Quarterly, Dick's remittance used to come. It would last him about a week and then he would stay sober till the next.

Dick had been someone of consequence in his time. In Human's one day I noticed him drinking with a stranger, a short, stocky German with fierce blue eyes and a big yellow moustache. He was introduced to me as Karl Peters. It was the great German explorer himself, the man who had won for Germany her East African colony.

"Where did you meet him, Dick?" I asked.

Dick laughed. "He was in charge of the German border commission which settled the border between British East and German East Africa."

"What were you doing there?"

"I was in charge of the British boundary commission. Peters and I were maneuvering for weeks over the ownership of Mt. Kilimanjaro. We each wanted the highest mountain in Africa in our own country's territory. He was too smart for me."

The war ended Dick—it ended all his kind. The scapegrace younger sons got themselves all gallantly killed—and there was little left to remit to anyone afterward. Dick got his leading a company through the mud of the Somme. Raffles keeps him company there,

but he took the way of the flying corps. Charlie Beresford followed the family tradition—I heard that he died at Zeebrugge. But of him later.

I walked into town from the bush one day, returning from some minor expedition. It was train day, I remembered. That meant there would be ice. The beer at Human's would be cold, with little beads of moisture on the bottle.

Halfway down the street Raffles beckoned to me from the veranda of a grogshop on the other side.

"What the blazes do you want to walk down that side for?" he asked when I had crossed over to him.

"Why shouldn't I?"

"Because Dick claims that side."

"What has Dick got to do with it?"

"He's up on the kopje with his Express rifle and a dose of jimjams. He says that's his side—he can't see the other—and he's taking shots at all trespassers."

I did not believe him and said so forcibly.

He then proposed a bet. We should order a round of drinks. If anything happened to prove his statement while we were drinking it, the round would be on me. Otherwise he would pay for it. Raffles would bet on anything, two scorpions fighting on a hot plate—we would warm the plate to make them lively—a race for a bit of meat by two soldier ants, or anything at all that had an element of chance in it. He used to cable money home to back his fancy for the Derby every year. He always had plenty of money and that was all we knew about him, except that one day I caught sight of his photo in court dress as he rummaged in his trunk.

Raffles won hands down as it happened. Before the drinks were even served an old Manica savage strolled

out of the bush and began to walk down the forbidden side of the road. Just as he arrived opposite us, there was a crash of glass and the window beside him splintered at the impact of the great Express bullet.

The old fellow jumped several feet in the air, straight up. I don't know how he managed it, although I have seen it done on the screen, but I have a distinct recollection of his turning about-face in mid-air. His legs were going through running motions before he touched the ground, so that when he landed he seemed to gain his maximum velocity from zero and sped forestward with the speed of a ricocheting bullet. He was lucky; Dick did not often miss.

"Dick's having fun," drawled Raffles, highly amused. "What if he does shoot someone? There are plenty of Negroes and Portuguese round here; surely we can spare one or two of them for a white man's diversion. But it might be fun to stalk him," he added, brightening.

We could hear Dick talking rapidly to himself within fifty yards of us as we crouched under cover of a boulder near the top of the kopje. There was nothing but a smooth expanse of short grass between us and the patch of thick scrub from which Dick's babble issued.

"Let's rush him," suggested Raffles.

"Dick," I cried on a sudden inspiration. "We're coming over for a drink."

"Whe-e-e!" A wild yell. "There you are again. I'll get you this time." The big leaden bullet "shooshed" over us. Raffles grinned at me and shook his head.

"Dick," he cried. "It's Raffles. Look out behind you. They're sneaking up on the other side of the kopje. We came to warn you."

I contributed some supporting evidence by throwing a stone as far as I could beyond Dick's lair. It landed in some dry sticks by luck, with quite a convincing crash.

"By Christ, it's them all right. Don't let them get me, Raffles."

He appeared out of the scrub at the double, rifle in one hand, a bottle in the other. His teeth were clenched as he ran, his eyes glared with an insane light. He dropped behind the rock beside us, poked his rifle over the top, and fired a shot back into the scrub whence he had come.

We got him to the hospital, where Nurse had him tapered off and in his right mind within the week.

Charlie Beresford was another of the crowd. He was a distant relation of Admiral Beresford, the "Fighting Charlie" of navy tradition. Charlie—our Charlie as opposed to the Admiral—was the antithesis of Raffles. Raffles was secretive, Charlie garrulous. Raffles drank cautiously, if continuously; Charlie's spasmodic busts were as bad as Dick's. On one of these Charlie drank himself into the melancholies and decided to commit suicide. Being an obliging sort of fellow he went to the cemetery to do it, to save his friends the trouble of carrying him there, as he explained to me afterward in the hospital.

He placed a revolver to his heart and pulled the trigger. The gun had an exceptionally hard pull. His hand was sweaty and slipped upon the butt, deflecting the barrel so that the bullet glanced off a rib. The shock put him out of action for a while. When he came to he tried to finish the job, but he was so weak from loss of blood and "pulled off" so badly that he missed himself with all five remaining chambers. Too weak to stand, he began to crawl back toward the town on all fours and ac-

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tually reached the hospital, which happened to be the nearest building.

"As bad a shot as Charlie" became a cliché for the rest of the time we knew him.

KING SOLOMON'S GOLD

IT was by now the beginning of 1912; although I did not know it yet, the lean years were almost over. For three years I had wandered, seemingly without purpose. But purpose was there. Success could come in such a country only from exploration and discovery of natural wealth. Judged by the standard of wealth for effort, those years had been lean enough. God knows I had tried, but failed of the reward. I owned nothing but the clothes I wore and my rifle—not much return for years of hardship. And yet there was something on the other side of the ledger too.

Stored in my brain was a picture of vast areas of unmapped country, rich in natural resources which civilization would one day capitalize. I was a welcome guest among any of a dozen native tribes. A dozen savage kinglets counted me their friend and brought their tribal problems to me to solve. Here was material which was surely worth something.

The pioneer days in Mozambique were passing fast. The free-lance prospectors—such as I—living by their rifles were making their last trips horizonward. They were being replaced by well-equipped mining engineers in the pay of big companies. Capital had at last turned its eyes to the wealth of the Mozambique forests, to the gold in the gravels of its river beds and the veins that seamed its mountains.

Men who knew the country were in demand—alas, how few of us were left.

The summer in Macequece was always hot. The moun-

tain circle around the little settlement seemed to deflect the heat and concentrate it on the village till we simmered like stew in a pot. It was on the hottest of days that the Americans came. I was loafing in the comparative coolness of Human's veranda, too lazy to move, when the biweekly train from Beira pulled in. I awoke to sudden interest at the five figures who emerged from the station and marched toward me.

They wore heavy woolen suits with double-breasted coats, bowler hats, and knob-toed shoes. They carried heavy suitcases. They puffed like grampuses and, ye gods, how they did sweat.

"What is it?" I asked, taking my stand behind the bar. Chris Human was away somewhere and any of us old hands who were about had fallen into the custom of doing the honors of the house. Most of us owed Chris money, which we repayed when we were in funds. Meanwhile we were glad to work off a little of our moral obligation by keeping bar gratis for him in his frequent absences.

"Beer," gasped a tall, thin man, who answered to the name of Nick, for Nicholson, as I was to discover, blinking from behind great tortoise-shell glasses at the array of bottles behind the bar.

"Beer," cried a little man named Hart, with a bowler two sizes too large for him. "By Jesus, I'm as dry as one of them horned toads that live in Death Valley and haven't seen a drink since they was pupped," he added, mopping the sweat from his face with a handkerchief which put rainbows to shame.

"Beer," chorused the other three, big, upstanding fellows all, tearing off coats and hats and flinging them into a corner.

The third round disappeared more slowly than the

others. I took the opportunity of asking them what they had come to Macequece for.

"To be barbecued, feels like," remarked Hart.

"To build a dredge on the Revue River," replied Nick, who was evidently the leader.

I knew all about that dredge. It was to be built on the Revue River flats, where the ancient working showed pock-marked when the sun was low—made by some forgotten race which had built Zimbabwe and a chain of other settlements, now ruined, from Sofala on the coast right along the gold belt to the edge of the Kalahari desert, a thousand miles inland.

I had even been employed by the French owners in testing some of the gravel. Pits sunk to bedrock and the water kept out by means of pumps—what we had wanted to do on our Ruenya concession, had funds permitted. But here on the Revue the ground had been worked out to water level, although from there to bedrock it had proved up rich. It was water which had beaten those ancient miners. Subjects of Hiram, King of Tyre—so said the archaeologists. If that was true, the Mozambique and Rhodesian gold belts were the Ophir of the Bible. If the wisdom of Solomon had been equal to evolving a pump, the Rhodesian and Mozambique gold field would not exist today, because practically every modern mining property there has been developed by following up the ancient workings, which invariably stopped at water level.

"How about a job?" I asked Nick.

"What can you do?" he queried.

I listed my accomplishments.

"Can you bust coons?" asked Hart.

"Can I what?"

"Can you kick these goddam niggers' trousers—only they don't wear any?"

"Stop it, Hart," laughed Nick. "How can you expect anyone to understand your brand of American until he's lived with you for months?"

He turned to me. "Hart wants to know if you can handle native labor. We know our stuff on dredge building but don't know a word of any language but our own."

Five round Cator huts with corrugated-iron walls and thatched roofs provided accommodation for the Americans in Rcvuc camp. On a deserted ant heap some little distance away I built myself a native hut with roof and walls of grass.

My official position in the growing organization of the dredge camp was that of compound manager, in charge of all native labor and second in rank only to the manager, to whom I acted as a sort of adjutant.

In addition to the above, I was self-constituted guardian to five innocents. I had known only one American before, although I had become intimate enough with him to have assisted in cutting his leg off. These five were something new. No pleasanter or more lovable waifs ever bought tropical clothing or played Slippery Sam under my guidance. I preached to them the folly of drinking their liquor straight in the tropics; poured five grains of quinine down their necks daily; showed them how to dig the burrowing chigger fleas from under their toenails; won their money fairly at cards and discouraged them from swimming in the crocodile-haunted river.

The officials of the French company which employed

us spoke only French. The Portuguese Government officials spoke only Portuguese. And several hundred native laborers, recruited from half-a-dozen far-flung tribes, spoke as many African dialects.

Portuguese I knew sufficiently well by this time. Some schoolboy French was disinterred from the depths of my memory and the native dialects were easy to me. My first few weeks were spent rushing from one busy group to another to act as interpreter. Finally they all struck a common medium by evolving a sort of *lingua franca*, an Irish stew of a dialect, which resembled no known language on earth.

It soon fell to my lot also to organize the wagon transportation from Macequece, when the heavy machinery of the huge dredge began to arrive.

The great steel hull began to take shape in the pit which had been dug to receive it by gangs of natives, who carried the earth away in metal pans on their heads. Now riveters were needed. This was work beyond the native ability and understanding, and we had to employ some of the white riffraff which had drifted into the country. Most of them were outlaws from Rhodesia who had crossed the border one jump ahead of the British South African police. They were at large in Macequece for lack of extradition arrangements between the two countries. A villainous lot, some of them lived for preference by the proceeds of the prostitution of their native women. They looked with disfavor on any kind of hard labor and it was only by the connivance of Senhor Serpa, commandant of police in Macequece, that we got them to work on the dredge. At our suggestion he threatened to deport any unemployed whites in his district. As they were wanted across the border for of-

fenses which ranged from murder to gun running, they came in to work with a rush.

We had about forty of these toughs working for some months. They lived in grass shelters erected around my own hut. What a crowd they were!

About the best of the lot was Nobby Clarke, deserted from the British Navy. Nobby was a handy man when he was sober. He could drive the rivets with any Tyneside shipyard man, but he used to go berserk when he was drunk and ragc through the camp, roughhousing anyone he could get his hands on.

Then there was a villainous little Goanese who had left Salisbury on the run; pimping for Pioneer Street brothels had been his offense, I guessed.

There was "Long Jim" Robertson, the Australian blacksmith, who was reputed to have killed a man on one of the Rhodesian mines. He was the only man of the lot big enough to stand up to Nobby—they used to fight on sight as soon as the liquor took hold.

"Parson" Jones neither drank nor swore. I sized him up as an embezzling bank clerk. He didn't fit with that roystering gang. He used to lecture the others on their sins. They got even by slipping a drunken black prostitute into his bed while he was on night shift, lining up outside the door to greet him when he sneaked her quietly out, and laughing him out of camp.

The rest of them were of a pattern. I managed to keep them thoroughly bluffed until we had finished with them and Serpa deported the lot of them as undesirables. I slept with my door locked—the first time in Mozambique—and kept clear of the shadows when I wandered at night.

There was one memorable occasion when Nick ap-

pealed to me for help, although during working hours these men were technically out of my jurisdiction. Four of them, with Nobby as the leader, had taken a case of whiskey into their hut, barricaded the door, and threatened to brain anyone who interrupted their party.

"I can't get these men out to work," cried Nick to me as I sat over breakfast, which was always delayed until I had got all the native gangs out to work. "What shall we do, send for the police?"

"Don't do that," I replied. "The Portuguese police will never tackle them. They'll send the askaris in to club them out with their knobsticks. It's poor business to encourage blacks to attack whites, even white trash. Destroys white prestige."

"What then?"

"I'll get them out if you give me a free hand."

"Anything you like short of killing them." Nick's law-abiding soul was not yet attuned to Mozambique.

I stationed "Long Jim"—nothing loth—outside the door with a pick handle. A drunken chorus from inside drowned the noise of our movements. A match applied to the back end of the hut set the tinder-dry straw ablaze in a moment. "Long Jim" did the rest, as the mutineers stampeded through the door with their clothes smoking. They were at work in a few minutes, battered but sober.

The dredge erection proceeded without undue delay. The steel hull floated when we turned the water from the river into the pit. A derrick swung great pieces of machinery into place, and the superstructure towered finally a hundred feet above the deck.

I wanted to know all about this great machine and how to operate it. Two hundred miles to the northward on the Ruenya River lay our concession, miles of river

gravels, like those this dredge was to dig. If a dredge were successful here on the Revue, another would do as well on the Ruenya, where the gravels were at least as rich.

When the machine actually began to work I got myself employed as an oiler. The Americans began to leave as soon as the fever season sent the first malaria chills racing through them. I soon became winchman, in charge of a shift, pulling the rows of levers in the control cabin high up in the superstructure, directing the power of a thousand horses as the great machine obeyed my touch upon the levers, bucking and protesting at the hardpan gravel on bedrock where the high gold values lay; gorging great bucketfuls of the softer upper-river wash; swinging sideways in silence, the digging machinery stopped, a huge tree trunk nipped between the buckets like a prehistoric bone in the teeth of an antediluvian beast, to dump it by reversing the bucket line in deeper water clear of the digging.

The dredge was a success. The gold tables on clean-up day would have filled the ancient miners with chagrin at what they had left.

THROUGH A FLY BELT AFTER RUBBER

I HAD intended to work a good deal longer on the dredge but a German tempted me. He was Becker, head of a big Hamburg trading house which had begun to pour its capital into Mozambique.

Becker was after a rubber concession. He had bought the patents on a machine which was claimed to crush the bark of the *Landolphia* rubber vine and extract the sap in a supposedly much more efficient manner than the hand methods hitherto in use. The *Landolphia* vine was known to flourish in many parts of the country, several of the tribes even paying their taxes in rubber.

He broached the project to me only after I had signed a six months' contract for my employment "at any place within the borders of Mozambique at the discretion of the first party . . . the second party agrees to work solely for the first party and not for his own interest during the period of this contract."

"Where does the rubber grow thickest?" Becker asked me.

"In the Mpunga forest," I replied.

"Have you been there?"

I nodded. I had been through that dismal, gloomy forest, three days' trek, where the sunlight never penetrated and the rubber vines writhed from bough to bough like endless brown snakes, petrified as they pursued one another through the twilight.

"That's where I take my concession then," he declared with an air of satisfaction.

"It's not as easy as all that," I told him. "Mpunga is the nearest rubber to the railway, it is true. From Mandegos station you could trek there in a week with loaded wagons, once you had made a road—if it weren't for the fly belt."

"What is a fly belt?"

"Tsetse fly, which kills your cattle when it bites them. Lives in certain clearly defined areas known as fly belts. You'd have to trek through fly country for the last two days before reaching the Mpunga forest."

"What about the other rubber forests?"

"The other places I know are farther from the railway. There is fly on the way to some of them. There may be fly on the way to all of them. No one knows yet; there is a lot of this country that is little known. Mpunga is best. Machinery can be got there, but it will be costly."

"Got to break eggs to make an omelette. Tell me how. Dead cattle can't pull wagons."

"In the dry season they live for a week or two after being bitten. If you bought up a large number of oxen and grazed them near Mandegos, clear of the fly belt, you would have a good reserve handy to draw on. Then you rush your loaded wagons through the fly belt, unload your machinery in the forest, and rush the empty wagons back. You should be able to get them clear of the fly belt on the way back before they get too weak to pull empty wagons. Then you can hook up with fresh oxen from the reserve for the next trip."

We decided on Mpunga. I moved down to Mandegos and set about buying cattle. I decided on using a convoy of five wagons. With that number I calculated I could

do the job in three trips. We would use up certainly, from fly alone, sixteen oxen per wagon per trip, plus a few spares that the lions were bound to get. Two hundred and forty oxen, plus spares for lions, seemed a lot to sacrifice for some machinery whose practical value was as yet unproven, but that was Becker's lookout.

Meanwhile I had sent a runner south to fetch Ufana. There is no one for handling oxen in the yoke like a Zulu. Besides, I was going to need a good man to help to rush those wagons through. This job was going to be no picnic, I felt, although it would be dry season before I could get a passable road cleared and the worst spots graded.

When he arrived I set him to work with a gang on the road. I knew he had been handling wagons recently for transport riders in Rhodesia and could be trusted to get the road in sufficiently good condition for the dash.

A young engineer came out from England to set up the machinery and run it, once we had got it through. I have forgotten his name. I christened him Archibald, because he spoke with an Oxford drawl. He was a nice lad, but green, verdant green. Unfortunately he had pronounced ideas about taking quinine. I was taking about ten grains a day myself, as the Mandegos district was somewhat unhealthy, and in the Mpunga forest the anopheles mosquitoes were almost thick enough to lean against. Archibald refused to take any quinine at all.

"It makes a man impotent," he confided.

"You'll be impotent enough when you're dead," I retorted, exasperated.

The machinery arrived by train and was unloaded. It was bulky stuff. Great metal cylinders and wooden packing cases.

Ufana took me over his road for final approval. He was in a grim mood. Civilization was proving too complicated for him. He deemed it little short of sacrilege to sacrifice oxen in a fly belt in order to move what he regarded as some uninteresting lumps of iron, too bulky to make spears of.

"Let us take the cattle home and buy women with them," was his advice.

"It is my task, Ufana, and I do not hold you to it. If it does not please you go back to your own country."

A bristle and a scornful look were all the answer to that. I knew there was no chance of Ufana deserting a friend in a tight place. He felt under obligation to me in the matter of the baboons—apparently my suggestion had worked so well that they were still scarce around his kraal.

There have been many worse friends in my life than old Ufana with his sketchy loin flap, his shiny headring, and his utter scorn for every native not of Zulu stock. I knew he would instill the fear of death into the lazy Manica wagon drivers whom I was placing under his orders. As things turned out, almost the whole onus of the affair was to fall on Ufana.

At last our five wagons got off on their first trip. I looked at Archibald doubtfully as we walked along ahead of them, clear of their dust. There was already a yellow tinge to his skin which I did not like. If he showed signs of malaria already, after a few weeks in the comparatively healthy climate of Mandegos, what would he do in the forest, I wondered. But it was his funeral. My job was to get the machinery in.

We trekked easily for several days. As soon as the cattle's tails began to swish too vigorously during their

grazing I guessed we were in the fly belt. There were plenty of flies about which looked like the common, harmless horsefly—but their wings folded like scissors, overlapping, the distinguishing mark of the tsetse.

After that there was nothing easy about it at all. We trekked day and night with only short stops for grazing. All our oxen were undoubtedly bitten and were doomed anyway. There was no use trying to keep them in condition. They must be driven, driven, driven until they were clear of fly country on the return trip. Then new oxen could relieve them, till they in turn were sacrificed on the next trip.

Archibald had already had the shakes for a couple of days before our arrival at the road terminus in the forest, but he still resisted every effort on my part to dose him with quinine. If I had had a hypodermic syringe with me, I would have given him injections by force, but there is no way I know of to stuff quinine down a man's throat if he refuses to take it.

The morning we were ready to leave on our return trip I found him raving, with a temperature of 105°. It would have been death to him to move him. I could not leave him. There was nothing for it but to stay and nurse him, trusting to Ufana to take the wagons through.

It was a bad dose of fever. Not just the normal affair of recurrent shakes and temperatures. It was the kind which makes a man vomit green almost continuously while an acute diarrhea purges him. In the ten days Archibald hung in the balance he must have lost forty pounds.

He pulled through, a pitiful bag of bones. But his gratitude for my nursing did not alter the fact that the

whole of my organization might well have been nullified by the obstinacy which made him refuse to take normal precautions and which had tied me down to his bedside at the climax of our work.

I thanked God for Ufana. He brought the wagons back on schedule. He had worked himself into a permanent rage under his responsibility. The Manica drivers looked battered and jumped to obey his smallest order, like recruits under the eye of a brigadier.

Ufana and I fitted a cartel bed on one of the wagons and took Archibald through with us. I never saw him again after I had put him on the Beira train at Mandegos station, but I heard that he was invalided home.

One more trip put our machinery on the site in the forest. We had accomplished our job—the cattle had lasted one return trip each and then lain down and died.

Becker sent up a couple of Goanese from Beira—the anopheles appears to share with me a lack of partiality to Goanese—to act as caretakers in the forest until he could get another engineer to replace Archibald.

Ufana took in pay the unused oxen and drove them slowly homeward. That was the last I ever saw of him. He had got enough out of the trip to buy a couple of new wives.

I heard afterward that the rubber machine had proved a complete failure.

A NEW INDUSTRY

ONE very definite objective was before me all this time—the development of my Ruenya concession. It was mine now. Tom had left me his share when he died and I had recently bought Smith out. My dredging experience had shown me what could be done with such a property. First I would make one more expedition, taking with me pumps and all the necessary equipment with which to reach bedrock and complete the testing of the gravels. That would make the property readily salable. It would cost a lot of money, but there was plenty of money to be made in Mozambique now the country was opening up. My three years of wandering were bearing fruit. I was in a position to earn more money in a month, from my knowledge of the country, than I could have earned in a year in more settled communities.

Once the Ruenya was sold I would buy land. No more mining for me. Land was the thing. In a healthy climate—there were plenty such to be found in Mozambique—where I could establish a family when I should marry and give them continuity of location through the generations. The Jouberts, the Bothas, the Retiefs, and many others had taken up vast areas of South Africa when it was as wild as Mozambique was today. They had established dynasties whose names cropped up in South African history generation by generation. Why should not I do the same in Mozambique?

Gorongosa's country was the place I had in mind,

where Chris and I had hunted elephants. There was a railway to be built through that country before long, I felt sure, Mozambique was developing so fast. It would probably be built with the object of connecting Beira and Nyasaland, bridging the Zambezi. That would take the right of way through some good country, not far from Gorongoza's kraal, where Chris and I had been kept prisoners for our own protection. It would be my land the passengers would watch through the windows of the trains. My tractor ploughs would turn the sod of those rolling grasslands, where the big-game herds played today and the little native gardens gave two bumper crops of maize each year.

When I returned from Mandegos I found men were pouring into Macequece and Human's Hotel was full. A new kind of men they were. Not the ragged, hard-bitten type of stranger we had been used to. They were well-dressed, prosperous-looking people, the kind that shave every day, bulge in the middle, and would play out in an hour on a hard march, or think the end of the world had come if they had to miss a meal.

But they had money. Their talk was of stocks and bonds and how they had sold them. They dreamed aloud their visions of sisal fiber plantations, mahogany, rubber, mines, and land concessions which they would develop. They were here to invest, but investments were hard to find for lack of men who knew the country. They would fire questions at me as they filled me with liquor to make me talk.

Several propositions were made to me, but it was Becker who signed me on again—at a figure that made me gasp when he accepted it without argument. I liked that German. He was ruthless but he was square. When

he wanted something he went and took it, regardless of how many eggs he broke to make the omelette. He fitted the country well.

He came hotfooting up from Beira with a new scheme fairly boiling over in him.

"Do you know anything about *acacia molissima*—black wattles?" he asked me.

"Of course. I was brought up in wattle country. My father used to grow them."

"What do you think of starting a wattle plantation in Mozambique?"

"They pay well in Natal."

"Do you know any place in Mozambique where they would grow?"

"They need hillside land, high up where the mountain mists hang. The Vumba range, south of here, is the place. You can see it from the street. Only one long day's trek."

Within a month I had established camp on the Vumba range and was clearing forest with a gang of Manica boys for an experimental wattle plantation of a hundred acres.

A lovely place, cool and healthy. Five thousand feet below the bushveld stretched away to infinity like a great dark carpet of mystery. Behind me, toward Rhodesia, a succession of mountain peaks clambered over one another to the sunset.

It was heavy forest land, bastard mahogany and *mjerentji*, trees that towered fifty feet to the first branch. The long line of laborers ate their swath slowly through it, cutting, piling, and burning.

I was living de luxe these days. The time was past when I had to sleep on the ground and live on the pro-

ceeds of my rifle. My cook was called Antonio, a half-caste Portuguese.

Antonio was a good caterer. There were eggs for breakfast the first morning after our arrival.

They were not of the freshest but still they were eatable. However, their quality did not improve. After several breakfasts off eggs which advertised their presence at several yards' range, I called Antonio on the carpet.

"Antonio, my eggs are always stale. Can't you get fresh ones?"

"Senhor, those eggs are the result of the greatest trouble on my part. For an hour I have worked to produce them."

"How so?"

"Senhor, these cursed kaffirs who live in these mountains do not eat eggs. Since no white man has ever lived here before, they had not even imagined that eggs were good to eat until we came. When first I offer to buy eggs they laugh. When I insist, they bring eggs—I pay money—little money, but much for them. Then they rush to find more eggs. They hunt in forest to find eggs left from hatchings of years ago. They bring hundreds of eggs, all bad eggs. I break more than one hundred eggs this morning and pick the two best for you."

"When will we get fresh eggs then?"

Antonio shrugged his shoulders expressively.

"First we must buy all the eggs they bring, bad or fresh. When the bad ones are finished the hens will still be laying and all the eggs will be fresh."

For the first week or so I had condensed milk in my coffee. Then I noticed fresh milk on the table. I was surprised as I had seen neither cattle nor goats in the district. The milk seemed fresh, it smelled fresh, it tasted

fresh to the tongue, with a sweetish taste—yet it curdled in the hot coffee.

“Antonio, your milk is sour.”

“Impossible, Senhor. It is not an hour old.”

“I tell you it is sour.”

“I milked it myself.”

“I can’t help it. It is sour. It curdles in the coffee. Cow’s or goat’s milk does not curdle in coffee when it is fresh.”

“This is neither cow’s milk nor goat’s milk.”

“What kind of milk is it?”

“Come, Senhor, I will show you.”

He led me to his palm-thatched kitchen. Inside was a buxom Manica wench, naked save for a string of beads. Suckling at her left breast was a baby. Antonio caught the right breast and squeezed it.

“See, Senhor, it is empty. Just milked for your breakfast. I have rented this side for the Senhor, the woman saves the other for her baby.”

Leopards were a pest. One took a dog from between my feet as I sat reading at midday on my veranda. Time after time I brought pigs in from the railway, laboriously carried on native porters’ heads, to vary the eternal diet of venison, monkey, or chicken. As fast as I brought them in the leopards took them.

About this time the Portuguese Government opened an experimental agricultural station on the Vumba. An Englishman named Sheppard came out to run it, accompanied by his wife, Gertie. Gertie brought home the loneliness of my existence. It was years since I had seen domestic life at close quarters. I had not missed it up till now, as my life had been so full of interesting things.

Gertie and I were walking one afternoon in the old-

fashioned flower garden she had planted with great care around their house.

"You mustn't worry so about lions and leopards, Gertie," I lectured her in a big-brotherly manner. "Everyone from England expects to see them on the doormat, or hiding under the bed. There are such things about, of course—but you'll probably never see one at all, even if you stay years in the country."

"O-o-oh," she cried, clutching my arm. "Look!"

I turned to follow her gaze. A fine male leopard was standing not ten yards from us on the garden path. He looked disdainfully at us for a moment, then strolled quietly into the forest.

CHAOS COMES

MOZAMBIQUE was undoubtedly booming when I returned to get in touch with things after my year on the Vumba. It looked as though the lean years had definitely gone for me when I turned a mining deal, a property I had staked a year or two before without much hope of ever doing anything with it.

I made the first payment on my land concession, and spent most of the balance in mining equipment for the Ruenya. I tried to get someone to accompany me there, but without success. Every veld-wise man in the country was in demand. New men were coming in fast, but their kind was not much use on such a trip as the Ruenya—Archibald had taught me the danger of the bush with an untried man. In the end I resigned myself to travel once more alone.

A mining engineer from one of the big Johannesburg mining companies was to join me on the Ruenya as soon as I had sunk those pits to bedrock with the equipment I had bought. If values proved satisfactory the Johannesburg company would buy my Ruenya concession at a price—already agreed upon—which would allow me to develop my Gorongoza land concession and pay the annual installments which would come due every year for the next five years. I had no fear of the result of our testing of the Ruenya. Values there were at least as high as on the Revue, where the dredge was proving a huge success.

It was success after struggle for me. For six years I had worked hard and suffered much with this end in

view. It spelled the permanency I longed for. I would build my house on Gorongoza Mountain, high up where the cool breezes blew. When the concession was sufficiently developed, I would go to South Africa to find a wife. I wondered if Winnie Miller had married. I had had no news of that family since the Bombata rebellion. Heavens, how long ago that seemed! I had squeezed a lot of action into eight years—but it had been worth it because I had won.

But the day before I was due to leave for the Ruenya I received a telegram from Johannesburg.

ARRANGEMENT CANCELED. NO COMMITMENTS POSSIBLE THIS TIME DUE RECENT DEVELOPMENTS EUROPE.

It was late July of 1914. Chaos had come. Long before I should see Mozambique again both my concessions were to lapse for lack of funds to keep up payments. I was practically penniless once more except for a pile of mining machinery which no one wanted as a gift under the circumstances.

Part II

THE GERMAN SOUTHWEST AFRICAN
CAMPAIGN

He doesn't lose his rifle, he doesn't lose his seat,
I've known a lot of fellows ride a damned sight worse
than Piet.

Kipling.

NOTE

The following chapters on the German Southwest African campaign are compiled from memory. Occasional variation from the facts may occur as no works of reference are available, if any exist.

CHAPTER I

VIVE LA FRANCE

MACEQUECE station was full of Frenchmen when I walked down to catch the train for Salisbury and points beyond. Christolet was there, from the Revue dredge—his little waxed moustache seemed to have acquired an extra curl at the thought of going to fight the Kaiser. I noticed De Jean, the rubber trader from the Chimanimani range, a hundred miles away across the bushveld. He had happened to be on his annual bust in Macequece when his notice arrived, recalling him to the colors. There were about a dozen of them all told, reservists. Every Frenchman in Manicaland had been called up. Some in spotless whites and clean-shaven chins, others bearded, wearing the ragged khaki slacks and shirt which were their only wardrobe.

Every one of them was full of alcohol and patriotism. When they saw me they cried *Vive l'anglais*, fell upon me, and kissed me on both cheeks—they knew I was on the same mission as themselves. I didn't feel a bit patriotic after a heavy night. Their breath smelled like a barroom after a jamboree, anis and absinthe predominating. I was glad to settle into a compartment with Christolet and a couple of the more respectable-looking. There was the best part of a week's journey ahead of us to Capetown and I planned to sleep during most of it.

But sleep was what I got least of on that journey. Every station along the line added its quota of French reservists. Every station had its deputation of most of the French population of the region. They pushed cases of champagne and bouquets of flowers in through the

windows. Women circulated the corridors, kissing everyone who looked French. I got my share, too. French permeated with hiccoughs, champagne laced with whiskey, kisses from male lips that were hairy, and from female lips only slightly less so. For some reason the elderly dowagers seemed to select me as a target upon which to register their patriotism, while the good-looking girls chose someone else.

Five days after leaving Macequece we pulled into Kimberley. Fifty drunken, disheveled Frenchmen decanted themselves onto the platform. Several of them held champagne bottles, which they drank from or offered to their friends. They uttered wild yells of relief after the tedium of their journey. They were beginning to attract a good deal more attention than I liked, and we had four hours to wait for our connection to Cape-town. I edged away from the mob.

A big Boer policeman on platform duty pushed his way into the thick of them with the idea of restoring order. They clamored around him, catching his arms, offering him their bottles, shrieking drunken questions at him in French, of which he evidently knew not a word. He was swamped in a moment, and I could only follow his whereabouts by a swirl in the crowd and by the stream of hearty oaths in South African Dutch which accompanied it.

I got clear of the crowd and was starting a bolt for a doorway, a taxi, and a hotel, when Christolet caught me by the arm.

"For God's sake don't leave us," he cried.

"Come along with me if you want to."

"I cannot. They are in my charge. I am officer of reserve." He waved a paper desperately.

"God help you then, you've got your work cut out to look after them for four hours till the train goes." I edged toward the doorway.

"No, no. Help me with them. We speak no English. The policeman will put us all in jail. Four hours—*non, non*—you must speak to the gendarme. Explain that we all go to fight. That these poor men have been five days without diversion, that they mean no harm."

I moved across the platform to the policeman. He had temporarily extricated himself from the mob. He was straightening his helmet, which had got pushed over one eye, mopping with his handkerchief at some *crème de menthe* which someone had spilled on his blue tunic, eying the crowd balefully meanwhile. They had all moved up to one end of the platform and were trying to sing the "*Marseillaise*," all but a couple who had gone to sleep on the station benches. The rest of the passengers had gone by now and we had the platform to ourselves.

He glared at me when I addressed him.

"*Alamagtag*," he cried. "Are you with those *schelms*? Look what they have done to my fine new tunic. I am going to run them into the *trunk* so long, till we find out all about them. Listen to them sing, like a lot of drunken kaffirs."

I commiserated with him on his tunic and explained that they were French reservists going to take ship in Capetown for France.

"Well, they have four hours to wait and they can't do it here. They'd have the station torn down long before then."

I sent Christolet to find out what the mob would like to do. At the top of their voices they chorused a desire to visit the local red-light district.

"What's that they are saying?" asked the policeman suspiciously.

"They want to go to the cinema," I lied. "Is there one open?"

"Put them in taxis and you'll be in time for the early show," said the policeman, relieved. "I'll give you a note to the policeman on duty outside so they'll let you in. But for God's sake try to keep them quiet."

There was a good deal of grumbling from the Frenchmen when they were ushered into seats in a respectable movie house. However, most of them settled down to a nap and I began to feel better.

It was De Jean who upset the applecart. He awoke after a while, took a bottle from his pocket, and drank long and gurglingly. I suppose he must have been thinking of the dusky Manica harem he had left on Chimanimani Mountain, for he jumped to his feet suddenly, waving his bottle aloft, and used his total of the English vocabulary in shouting, "'Oman; me want 'oman."

There was a general free-for-all after that. I slipped out just as the police came on the scene and arrested the gang. Finally, after a good deal of explanation at headquarters, we contrived to have them taken to the station in black marias and kept under guard in their compartments until the train pulled out.

It was with a sigh of relief that I heard them singing the "Marseillaise" on the deck of the *Edinburgh Castle* as she moved out of Capetown dock two days later.

TREACHERY IN HIGH PLACES

CAPETOWN was seething with war enthusiasm. Like the rest of the British Dominions, South Africa had placed all her resources of men and money at the disposal of the mother country. News of the landing of the British Expeditionary Force in France had just been published. Patriotic meetings packed the city hall nightly, and the Recessional was sung each night with roof-lifting fervor.

Six hundred miles northwest of Capetown lay the Orange River, the border of German Southwest Africa. There were rumors of German concentrations along the river. There was also a story current of a mysterious German airplane which flew across the country nightly on some mysterious errand. It was even supposed to have been heard circling over Capetown itself.

I had never seen an airplane, nor had I ever talked to anyone who had. Most South Africans were as ignorant. Even so, if we had stopped to think, we might have reflected that the English Channel had only recently been flown for the first time and that a flight of twelve hundred miles was rather a revolutionary departure from the previous nonstop record of less than a hundred. But the declaration of war seems to affect strangely the psychology of a people. The fantastically impossible becomes the possible overnight. A few days afterward, did not the most conservative of English papers print the story of the Angels of Mons, the intervention of the Black Prince with his archers to support the hard-pressed British line, and did we not believe it?

Most people guessed the probable duration of the war at six months, and I was wild with enthusiasm to get into the show before it finished. Every passage on home-bound ships was booked up weeks ahead by enthusiasts with the same idea as my own. I even canvassed the docks with the notion of working my passage to England as coal trimmer, stoker, steward, deckhand, or in any other capacity which would give me transportation. But the shipping companies were besieged with eager applicants and I was again forestalled.

I was walking up Adderley Street one day, fuming with impatience, when I ran into Colonel Woodhead, whom I had known slightly in Rhodesia. He was a great burly man with a parade-ground voice, who had raised one of those irregular regiments of horse which did such good service in the Boer War.

I found he was raising a regiment now—foot this time—for service overseas. I begged him to take me on.

"I need someone to do the office work," he replied. "Select recruits and keep the records straight. I'll take you on as you've seen active service. We're only taking on men with an active-service record as that'll shorten our time of training at home and give us a chance to get at the blighters before those damned Regulars eat them up."

Next day I was seated at a desk in the city hall signing on recruits, with the temporary rank of captain, acting adjutant of the Capetown Rifles, as we called ourselves.

Volunteers drifted in rapidly in response to the advertisement we had inserted in the *Cape Times*. Men with the stamp of the drill sergeant in their easy carriage and square-set shoulders, war ribbons on their

breasts. Boer War veterans mostly, with a sprinkling from almost every minor war fought by British troops on the African continent in the last generation. There was an air of eagerness about them. They too wanted to get into the show before it was over.

Within a week we had the thousand men we had set ourselves to recruit. Woodhead and I drafted a cable to Lord Kitchener.

OFFER ONE THOUSAND MEN WITH ACTIVE SERVICE
RECORD REQUEST BRITISH GOVERNMENT SUPPLY TRANS-
PORTATION.

The answer came. It somewhat dashed our enthusiasm when we opened the flimsy envelope together.

BRITISH GOVERNMENT HIGHLY APPRECIATIVE YOUR
PATRIOTIC EFFORT BUT CAN ONLY ACCEPT CONTINGENT
THROUGH OFFICIAL CHANNELS SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERN-
MENT STOP RECOMMEND APPLICATION SOUTH AFRICAN
MINISTER OF DEFENSE PRETORIA THANKS.

Colonel Woodhead caught the first train to Pretoria to interview the Minister of Defense, while the rest of us waited anxiously for news. When it came it was not encouraging. It puzzled us. The Minister of Defense had thrown cold water on the scheme. The South African Government, he said, would take all necessary steps to support the Empire, but its policy was to discourage the raising of irregular corps, as their fighting value was doubtful.

This was insult. It had been the irregular corps which had been most effective in the Boer War, matching the Boers at their own tactics, while the regular troops were learning the game. It was ridiculous. They were turn-

ing down Kipling's "men that could shoot and ride." We felt that there must be some hidden motive behind it, but we couldn't even hazard a guess at what it was.

As soon as Woodhead returned from Pretoria, in an explosive mood, we cabled Kitchener again:

SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT REFUSE TO ACCEPT US
WE WANT TO FIGHT STOP CAN YOU GET US HOME.

Kitchener replied:

SORRY CANNOT ACCEPT YOU AS CONTINGENT BUT
GUARANTEE ACTIVE SERVICE ALL WHO CAN ARRANGE
PASSAGE CIVILIAN CHANNELS.

That was the end of the Capetown Rifles. I booked the first available passage—some weeks hence—and set myself to wait with what patience I could, which was little. The news of Mons and the retreat made us frantic. Scores of us were pacing the Capetown streets, counting the days till our boats should sail. There was a little underground tearoom on Adderley Street where a dozen of us would gather, chewing over the latest news and making wild guesses as to why the War Minister of a loyal dominion should refuse the services of a thousand picked men.

It was another chance encounter in Adderley Street which changed my plans. It probably saved my life. Had I sailed it is likely that I should have ended with the bulk of Kitchener's First Hundred Thousand, in a grave in Flanders mud, at Loos, Neuve Chapelle, Ypres, or on the Somme.

A hand came quietly to rest on my shoulder from behind, and a steady voice with a very familiar intonation said, "Peter Rainier, where the hell have you been all this time?"

I turned. A Carbiner uniform was the first thing that registered, shiny black top boots, glittering spurs, slouch felt hat turned up on the left side and clasped with the NC badge. It was Cope inside it—Cope, who had led my troop in the Zulu rebellion. He was a captain now, by the three stars on his shoulder.

"Great God, Cope," I cried, pumping his hand. "What are you doing in Capetown in the Carbineers' uniform?"

"Why man, we're going to the front. Didn't you know?"

"To France?"

"No. German Southwest Africa. Detrained here last night with the Imperial Light Horse and the Natal Light Horse. Three brigades of horse, half-a-dozen battalions of foot, and several batteries of guns are here now—an expeditionary force. The Germans have crossed the border. They've wiped out a patrol of the South African Mounted Rifles already—invaded the country, by God. We'll teach them a lesson. Why don't you join us? We're under strength, at least my squadron is."

Would I join them? Fight with my own people in a country which I knew? Pay off old scores against the Germans there? I'd have to fight as a trooper. No chance of a commission for me in a crack regiment like the Carbineers. All officers rose from the ranks and years of service were a requisite for promotion to commissioned rank. But what odds?

The expeditionary force was camped at Rondebosch, near where the great bronze Rhodes lies brooding on his granite bed, behind the rows of bronze lions, looking to the northward, where lies the land to which he gave his name.

"I want to get on the strength again," I told the adjutant of Carbineers, as he sat behind the desk in his orderly room tent. I took it as a matter of course that the regiment would jump at the chance.

"Sorry, Rainier," was the unexpected reply. "Orders are to take on no more recruits."

"But, man, I'm no recruit. I've fought in this regiment—in the Zulu rebellion—B Squadron. I'm a reservist—I'm in the regiment and I've come to report for duty."

"I know it. I remember you. But orders are orders. We are under strength and yet they won't even allow us to fill from the reserve."

"But, good God, man . . ."

"Sorry. I can't help you. Better see someone higher up."

I went to Cope.

"There's something queer about this," I told him.

"They may be short of remounts," he suggested.

"I saw a thousand horses at least in the remount depot as I came here," I argued. Then I told him about my recent experience with the Capetown Rifles.

"It does sound fishy," he remarked. "It fits in with a rumor of unrest among the backveld Boers. Several of the old Boer leaders have been electioneering around those parts recently—Generals De Wet, Beyers, and Maritz. Delarey got himself accidentally shot by a policeman in Johannesburg a few days ago, fortunately for us, I think. But that leaves the others, who are men with a lot of influence among the ignorant backvelders. I wouldn't put it past them to start something. They hate the British. Suppose for the sake of argument that the War Minister was in with them secretly—he would naturally want the expeditionary force to be

as weak as possible so that the Germans could mop it up, wouldn't he? Then he would want to select for it as many as possible of the regiments which are undoubtedly loyal to the British connection. If he wanted to do the job properly he would keep them as short of munitions as possible."

Mentally I ran over the roster of the regiments whose badges I had seen around the camp. As far as I could judge there would be no troops left in the country but Boer commandoes when we sailed.

"I was talking with one of the ordnance Johnnies this morning and he was saying they had only a small part of the ammunition they indented for," Cope added.

"Do you realize you are accusing some important people of treason?" I cried, astounded.

"I didn't accuse anyone of anything. I just brought a few facts to your attention. Don't quote me—forget everything I've told you—or you'll be seeing me with my back to a wall and a handkerchief over my eyes. All the same, I'm willing to bet that I've guessed right."

"But that implies that they are working with the Germans. The enemy will be informed of all our plans and they'll be laying for us at every turn."

"Lovely prospect, eh?" He laughed in his quiet way.

"Why don't you see Mackenzie?" he added. "If you still want to join."

"Colonel Mackenzie?"

"He's Brigadier General Sir Duncan Mackenzie now, in command of the expeditionary force. You'll find him in that big marquee tent where the flag is flying, over by the statue."

I was in a turmoil as I walked across the green turf to General Headquarters. I felt that Cope was right. He always was a levelheaded fellow—one of the cool, quiet

kind, who never got excited and always used his head. Besides, the facts fitted in too well for him to have been mistaken. But I was cheered that Mackenzie was in command. The Germans would have to be pretty smart to outmaneuver that old warrior. Mackenzie would have good men behind him too. Those mounted brigades had all the mobility of Boer commandoes, with the discipline that the commandoes had lacked, which had been their chief weakness in the Boer War. The Natal Carbineers and Imperial Light Horse were seasoned troops too, with fine Boer War records. It would be the Boer War over again in one way. South African sharpshooters against European trained troops. It had taken odds of five to one before the British had been able to smother the Boer defense. The Germans would have to be at least five to one before they beat us.

A sentry stopped me. His kilt and sporran proclaimed him one of the Capetown Highlanders.

"I want to see the General," I said.

"Hae ye an appuntment?"

"No, but he'll see me if you tell him my name."

The sentry suddenly stiffened to attention.

I turned to see Duncan Mackenzie standing behind me. He had aged a bit from the man who had caught Dinizulu in his net seven years before; still more from the man who had squatted by the fire in the early days of Johannesburg and urged my father to stay and make his fortune. His red face was bisected by a bushy white moustache. He stood in the characteristic attitude I remembered, hands behind his back, feet planted well apart. "Mad Dunc" Mackenzie they had called him in pioneer days for his reckless daredeviltry. But he could be cool too; I had seen that myself in those tense moments at the capture of Dinizulu. He looked as alert, in

spite of sixty-odd years, as a terrier quivering at the smell of a rat. Yet he looked solid too, solid as the mass of granite near-by wherein Rhodes lay brooding.

"Well?" he queried abruptly. It was evident that he did not recognize me.

"Peter Rainier, sir. I've been trying to join the Carbineers but they won't have me."

"God's Trousers! Will Rainier's son, from Barberton. But I've seen you somewhere since then."

"Dinizulu's kraal, sir."

"By God, so it was. That old fox gave us an uneasy moment when he put on his royal-dignity stunt. Want to join the Carbiners, eh? Won't have you? Why not?"

"Orders to take on no more men."

"H'm—that's so. Come and have tea with me and we'll talk about it. Get you in somewhere."

At tea I was introduced to Sir George Farrar, the quartermaster general, who remembered my father in Barberton. There was one other man there, who intrigued me on sight—a quiet-mannered man who spoke English with a Boer accent. His eyes were of a blue so pallid that they were almost white. They seemed to lack the power of concentration and looked right through me as though seeing something beyond. Yet he was so alert that when someone carelessly brushed a teacup from the table with his elbow, this man leaned forward and caught it deftly before it touched the floor.

He was introduced to me as Major Demilion, chief of intelligence. I knew who he was then. He had fought with General Botha against us in the Boer War. Refused to take the oath of allegiance after the Peace of Vereeniging. Seen service with the French after that in Madagascar. He liked the French less than the British, however, and came back to Capetown after two years to

take the oath. The English officer who gave it to him persuaded him to take service with the Germans, acting as a British secret agent. They deported him, to allay German suspicion, publishing in the papers that the famous irreconcilable, Demilion, had returned to Capetown, refused once more to take the oath, and had been deported. He arrived among the Germans with angry words against the British on his lips, took service in the Germans' wars against the Hottentots, and rose to high rank. The last I had heard of him was that he was serving with the German staff in their Herrera campaign in German Southwest Africa, the very country the expeditionary force was bound for. Now he was Mackenzie's chief of intelligence. Why, he must know the German territory as a boy knows his mother's own kitchen. I wondered if Mackenzie knew of the plot which Cope had guessed at. I was willing to bet that he did and that he held an ace up his sleeve, the wily old devil.

"Now, Rainier, tell us what you have been up to since the rebellion," ordered the General, eating buttered scones with gusto and swearing at his orderly because the toast was hard.

"I've been in Mozambique mostly, but before that I spent some time in German Southwest Africa after diamonds."

"When was that?" questioned Demilion sharply, coming to life so suddenly as to surprise me.

I outlined the story briefly.

"I remember the case," he confirmed. "Shortly after you two were deported the Germans threw that mining field open so that it could be taken up by a German syndicate."

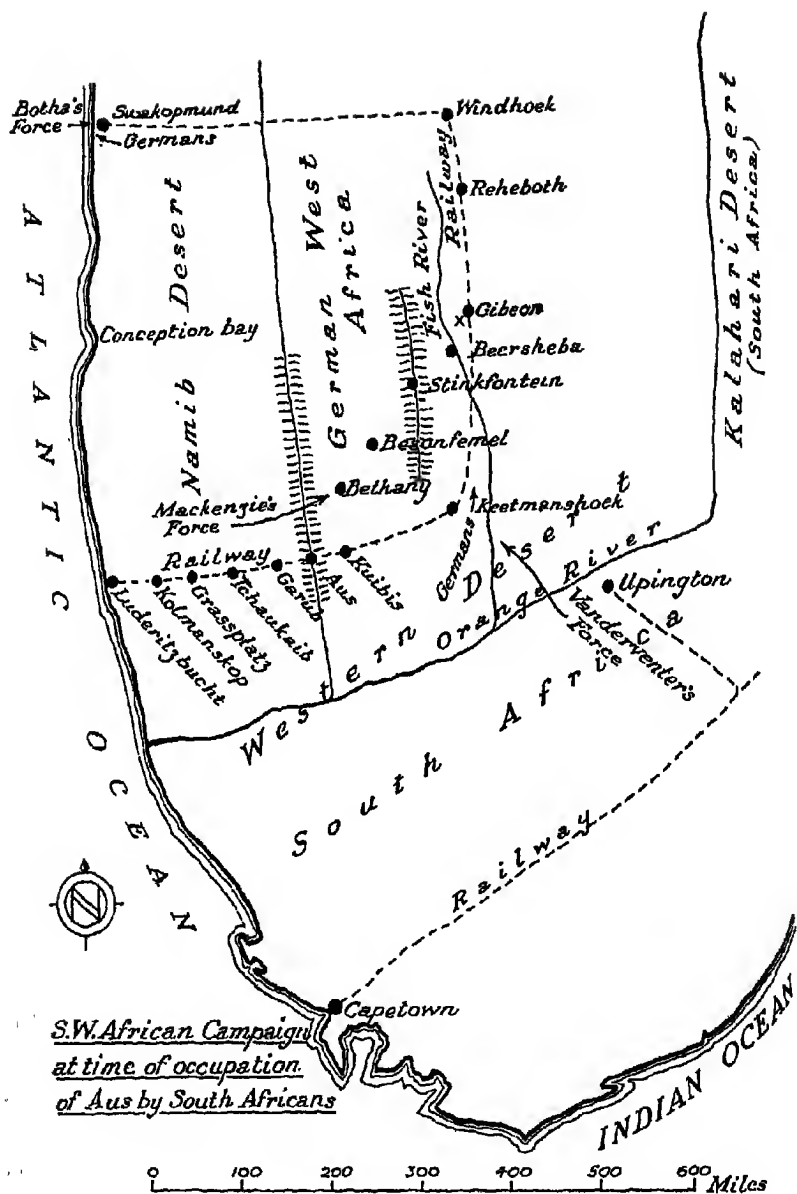
"Will you take him, Demilion?" asked the General.

"He's all right. Farrar and I knew his father . . . the boy was with me in the rebellion."

Demilion nodded.

"Demilion's got permission to recruit thirty scouts," explained the General.

So it happened that I was enrolled with Demilion's troop of scouts, attached to the Carbineers' brigade.



THE TAKING OF LUDERITZBUCHT

ABOUT a week later our fleet of a dozen transports and several tugs sailed out of Table Bay. It was not till we were out of sight of land that our destination was made public—Swakopmund, the northern port of German Southwest Africa, some five hundred miles up the coast from Luderitzbucht. Windhoek, the capital of the German colony, lay about 150 miles directly inland from Swakopmund. It was evident even to such a novice of military strategy as myself that a move on Windhoek was more practicable from Swakopmund than from Luderitzbucht, the only other point on the coast from which a railway gave access to the interior, across the Namib desert.

I approached Demilion, who was smoking in the lee of a lifeboat as peacefully as though he were a passenger on an excursion steamer. I was eager to get some idea of the strategy we would adopt and to see whether Cope's theory of treason had a basis of truth.

I asked him whether he expected much opposition to our landing in Swakopmund.

He laughed quietly as he knocked his pipe out against a davit.

"There would be. The main German force is concentrated there to wipe us out—only we are going to land in Luderitzbucht where they don't expect us."

He laughed again when I told him Cope's theory. He confirmed the story and the fact that some important people were in German pay.

"Why don't they arrest them, then?" I cried.

"They could arrest them, I suppose. But Botha and Smuts are playing a deeper game than that, unless I miss my guess. I'm willing to bet that they will let De Wet and Maritz rebel. That would probably cause the others to show their hands and give Botha and Smuts the proof they want. Then they will jump on the rebels before they can join their German friends."

"You think the Germans are backing them?"

"There are forty thousand German saddles and rifles in Keetmanshoek. Seen them myself. Keetmanshoek is the nearest town to the South African border. Those saddles and rifles are to arm the Boer rebels, in my opinion." Demilion settled himself down on a coil of rope and his pale eyes turned away from me.

Demilion's scouts appeared to be a hard-bitten crowd, much of the type of the frontiersmen I had known further north.

Pexton, the Rhodesian prospector, was a tall, hatchet-faced man with a long, lean body. He had the hungry look which professional prospectors seem to acquire after a sufficient number of disappointments have come their way. He had got out of the habit of talking, as his kind do. He seemed to live in a perpetual reverie, from which he only roused himself when mines or minerals were mentioned.

There was a Boer named Piet Uys, who looked like a stock farmer from the edge of the desert country back of Upington. He was the eldest of the crowd, one of De Wet's famous commando in the Boer War. He was a tall, rangy chap with wide shoulders, narrow hips, beady black eyes, a black beard, a Bible in his pocket, and the queerest mixture of profanity and scriptural quotations on his lips.

I don't know how Fox succeeded in getting into the

scouts. I suppose that it was because he had been in Luderitzbucht for a few months during the diamond excitement years before and was therefore supposed to know something of the country. He wasn't much of a horseman and his shooting was distinctly second-class. He made a living in peacetime dealing in secondhand cars in Kimberley; but he was a cheery soul, which means a lot in wartime.

These three and I formed a section.

Demilion had been right. Luderitzbucht was our real objective. Those great South Africans, Generals Botha and Smuts, were a wily pair. They were using the treachery of their own countrymen to outwit the Germans. It had been arranged to deliver all the loyal troops in the country, short of ammunition, into the German trap at Swakopmund. The bulk of the German forces would be concentrated there to annihilate us. Botha and Smuts were deliberately leaving the traitors in office till we had secured our foothold in Luderitzbucht, which was probably almost undefended because the Germans would be counting on their plan going through. I began to feel more cheerful about the outcome.

They landed us in lighters which were unloaded from the deck of one of the transports and towed by tugs, which crept up to us mysteriously out of the darkness, seeming to materialize out of nothing, as things have a habit of doing when plans are well made. It was about midnight and the whole line of transports lay wallowing in the swell, out of sight of land.

Ours were the only horses unloaded. Our troop was supposed to land south of the town, ride across the desert, and cut the railway to isolate in Luderitzbucht any railway equipment which might be there.

The Imperial Light Horse were to form the main landing party on foot. We could hear the noise of their movement from one of the other transports as our tug pulled us away from the ship's side.

We were loaded deep. The white foam slipping by in the starlight seemed almost level with our feet. Fortunately the sea was calm.

It seemed hours before the low shore line loomed ahead. The tug swerved as soon as the water shoaled, swinging us close inshore, then stopped.

"Mount, one by one, jump your horse into the water from the deck, swim him ashore, then form up on the beach," came Demilion's order.

After an hour's ride along the beach we cut inland among the sand dunes for a short distance, then stopped. A pair of glimmering steel rails lay in the starlight before us.

Demilion took dynamite from his saddlebags, adjusted the fuse, scraped a hole under a rail in the soft sand, placed the charge, and heaped sand over it.

"There's our job ready to do," he remarked with obvious satisfaction. "Orders are to touch it off when we hear a train coming. The town's just over that rise and we'll likely hear hell popping there in a few minutes."

The desert night was cold. I shivered.

"Cold?" queried Piet Uys the Boer, from where he stood at my elbow.

"Yes. Are you?"

"My body is cold. But my heart is warm with the hope that we shall smite the *verdomt* Amalekites before the sun is up."

"God," I thought. "That's the worst of the old-school Boers—religious fanatics."

"But hope will not warm the body," continued Piet. "Try this."

He pushed a bottle of rum into my hand. His religion was tempered with a good deal of common sense, I reflected, as the raw liquor burned my throat and started a comforting fire in my belly.

A long arm reached out of the darkness and Pexton's red-Indianlike profile was silhouetted against the paling sky. He drank long and gurglingly, then passed the bottle back without a word.

It was lightening fast. Demilion beckoned us up to where he lay on the top of a high sand dune. As I lay beside him I could see the well-remembered town of Luderitzbucht spread out dimly in the half-light, about a mile away. It was evidently asleep, or waiting. Who could say?

Out in the bay three tugs were foaming shoreward, towing as many lighters, packed with troops. We held our breath, waiting to hear the burst of fire from the town which would tell of their discovery.

Closer the tugs crawled, smoke belching from their funnels as they made all steam to cross the narrowing belt of water between them and the shore before they were fired on. They swerved as they reached shallow water, swinging the lighters shoreward by their own impetus. Crowds of khaki figures leaped in up to their armpits and splashed their way ashore; Imperial Light Horse they were. They formed up on the beach silently. The surprise landing had been effected. Beyers' plot with the Germans had been outplotted.

"There's the train," remarked Demilion. "What a surprise Luderitzbucht is going to get."

The train was standing quietly in the railway sta-

tion, separated from the landing party only by a few blocks of drab-colored houses. Our glasses brought it so close that we could see the fireman shoveling coal into the firebox, getting up steam for its scheduled departure.

"She leaves at six," added Demilion. "It's close on that now."

Suddenly there was a shot. It sounded like a revolver shot to me. Then the double-sounding report of a Mauser rifle—so different from the single crack of our own Lee-Enfields—as a sleepy sentry noticed the khaki figures on the beach and fired.

In a moment Luderitzbucht was swarming like a hive of bees. Pyjama-clad figures of men rushed from drab, gray, concrete buildings, firing pistols. Some German soldiers in uniform emerged from a building near the water front, dragging a machine gun which they began to set up where it could sweep the street leading from the beach. They were swamped by the silent khaki line, as the Imperial Light Horse swept through the town, the glitter of their fixed bayonets reflecting the rising sun.

There was some scattered firing, but no real fight. The town population scuttled for the railway station, the line of bayonets close behind. A fat German woman in a blue nightdress was in the van of the rout. She dragged a small, dark-haired child by the hand. A slender woman in a pink-silk nightdress overhauled her and took first place, carrying her clothes bundled under one arm. A solid German in red-striped flannel pyjamas was making heavy going in the loose sand of the street. Germans in all stages of undress streamed toward the station, surprised utterly, their one idea to catch that standing train before it left.

A building near the station suddenly began to vomit men and women promiscuously, all in sleeping attire.

"The town prossies," chuckled Fox, who knew Luderitzbucht. "The town husbands too—all running a race with the town wives. Won't there be hell popping when they all settle down in prison camp together . . . it'll help to pass the monotony for them."

The mob converged from three directions on the station. The line of bayonets began to merge with the rear-guard of the rout, passing the hindmost. The South Africans too were racing for the train, whose driver had not yet caught the alarm. Suddenly there was a puff of steam from the engine and the train began to move while the van of the crowd was level with the rear coaches, into which they began to scramble.

But the train was not to escape and the charge of dynamite we had laid to stop it was never needed. A little group of Imperial Light Horse emerged from behind a building ahead of the moving engine and boarded the train before it could get up speed. It stopped so suddenly that we could hear the crashing of the bumpers from where we lay.

In a few moments the crowd around the station was ringed with bayonets. We watched them being sorted out into small groups and marched under guard toward the lower end of the town, where they would be kept pending means of shipping them to prison camp in South Africa.

"All right, men," ordered Demilion with the grim smile which was the nearest he ever came to laughing. "Draw that charge, get mounted, and we'll have breakfast in town—if the Imperial Light Horse haven't looted everything fit to eat before we get there."

I smiled to myself as we passed the Luderitzbucht

jail, where Airey and I had been confined for an hour while awaiting deportation. I felt that I was already almost even with the Germans. How they had been fooled!

By noon that day we were riding out of Luderitzbucht once more. We got into contact with an enemy patrol among the shifting sand dunes of Grassplatz, near the Kolmanskop diamond mine, about a dozen miles inland. There was a bit of a running fight without much damage on either side. We chased them to where the sand dunes flattened into the great plain of the inner Namib desert, about twenty miles inland from Luderitzbucht.

Once in the open, they joined another force of mounted Germans, too numerous for us to tackle, who were evidently demolishing the railway line as they retreated inland. The acrid fumes of dynamite came faintly toward us on the desert air. We watched the little columns of sand thrown up and heard the thuds of the bursting charges. Occasionally we could even see a chunk of the rail fly skyward. We cursed futilely as we lay on the hot sand of a ridge. But at least our dash had saved us intact some twenty miles of railway.

We moved back to the abandoned buildings of Kolmanskop for the night. This was to serve as our base for the next six weeks of desert patrols beyond the sand dunes, while the rebellion in South Africa paralyzed our communications and left us temporarily abandoned, at the mercy of an enemy who was strong enough to crush us if he had plucked up the courage to try.

AN AFFAIR OF PATROLS

WE lay just behind the crest of one of the inner sand dunes at Grassplatz, looking over the yellow hell of the inner Namib desert. It was early morning and the sun had not yet set the mirages dancing to destroy the visibility. Thirty miles away in the center of a great flat plain several little white metal matchboxes denoted the corrugated-iron buildings of Tchaukaib station. Another red metal matchbox mounted on four matchsticks was its water tank. Five miles behind us was Kolmanskop, with its towering diamond-mining machinery, held by us. Tchaukaib was held by the Germans. In between stretched thirty-five miles of no man's land, flat desert below sea level where the thermometer registered 140° Fahrenheit at midday and dropped to 40° at night.

Between us and Tchaukaib a thin column of dust towered skyward, mounting a thousand feet or more on the still morning air, like yellow smoke from the infernal fires below, which one could imagine heated this devil's frying pan till its rocky structure seared the hand at noon, peeling the skin like hot iron. The dust came from a German patrol which we were watching.

"I'll make a deal with you, old Praise the Lord," remarked Fox, rolling on his back and tipping his hat over his eyes to keep the sun out.

Piet Uys looked at him suspiciously.

"You trade like a Jew *smouse*. That packet of cigarettes you gave me for a curb chain was only half full.

The Children of Israel spoiled the Egyptians—but I'm no bloody Egyptian."

"I was only going to trade my watching for your sleeping," laughed Fox. "I sleep better than I watch, you watch better than you sleep."

"This is a queer war," remarked Piet to me, ignoring Fox. "When I rode with De Wet in the Boer War we fought always against odds. Sometimes as few as thirty of us were maneuvering against thousands of the British, because there were no more of us. But here thirty of us maneuver against the Germans while two thousand of our horsemen and eight thousand foot soldiers stay in Luderitzbucht."

I explained to him what Demilion had told me about the treachery in high places.

His white teeth flashed a moment behind his black beard when he appreciated the reason for the sudden change of landing places from Swakopmund to Luderitzbucht.

"Louis Botha and Janie Smuts are *slim kerels*," he remarked. "Demilion is another. They could not have done it without the knowledge that Demilion gave them. That one is as slim as an old jackal who has eaten poisoned bait and recovered. He must have known all that the Germans know about treachery at home.

"Look out, Fox, here comes the *Baas*," he added, nudging Fox with his heel.

Stumbling almost knee-deep in the loose sand of the dune, Demilion scrambled up beside us. He tamped his pipe with his forefinger as his eyes flickered over the desert like the lens of some moving camera.

"Which way is that patrol moving?" he asked.

"They left Tchaukaib at dawn. Seem to be heading

for that long ridge to our left where we had that affair last week."

"Fox, go down and tell General Mackenzie that there's a German patrol in sight. You'll find him waiting where we left our horses. Says he wants some sport."

The General returned with Fox, breasting the sand slope gallantly in spite of his short legs and swearing fearfully. He dropped beside us and glared at the desert as though it were a personal affront.

"You bloody scouts get all the fun," Mackenzie rumbled, extracting a packet of cigarettes from the pocket of a skin-tight pair of riding breeches, taking one, and tossing the packet to Piet. "Where's that patrol, Demilion? Any chance of cutting them off? That damned base camp is as dull as hell. I want a ride after something—and a bit of shooting thrown in. Haven't had a shot at anything since I left home."

"Once they are behind the ridge we can cut in behind them," replied Demilion, watching the distant patrol through his glasses.

An hour later we were out on the flat desert, cantering steadily forward. General Mackenzie was mounted on a great, spanking chestnut of his own breeding. Behind him rode his galloper, Corrie, on what looked like the chestnut's blood brother.

Corrie was a well-known figure in the expeditionary force. He was some distant relation of the General's, to which fact he probably owed it that he was there at all. He could not have been more than fifteen years old, weighed little more than eight stone, but could ride like an Irish fox-hunting squire. He looked like a little cherub perched on the great horse.

For some miles we rode along the railway line. There

were no trains on it for the simple reason that the methodical Germans had blown a chunk out of the center of each rail.

The line was being as methodically laid behind us by the P.B.I. (Poor Bloody Infantry). They lifted each rail and sent it back to a homemade machine shop in Luderitzbucht. There the ragged section in the center was laboriously hacksawed out. Then, after holes were drilled for bolts, the two short sections were shipped back to railhead to be relaid. In this way the line crept forward slowly into the desert, a few hundred yards each day. When it had moved forward a few miles beyond the railhead camp, the army marched forward an equal distance and again sat down at the end of it.

We reached the farther end of the long ridge before the Germans emerged from behind the other. We were now between them and their lines without their having discovered us.

The scouts split. Half rode with Demilion around one end of the ridge, the General led the rest of us round the other.

"Any news, sir?" I asked the General.

"Yes. Good news. Botha and Smuts smashed the rebels. Captured De Wet. Maritz got clear with less than a score of men, crossed the German border. Beyers tried to follow him, but Botha's men shot him as he was swimming the Orange River. Things will begin to move here soon. Christ—there are some Germans—half a dozen of them—let's after the devils—why, the silly bastards can't ride—look at them holding to their saddles."

The Germans had rounded a spur of the ridge a couple of hundred yards away, riding toward us. When they saw us they turned and galloped back the way they had come. The General was after them, Corrie at his

heels, sitting well down in the saddle as though they rode to hounds. The rest of us slowed up quickly. There was no sense in killing our solid troop horses by trying to keep up with a pair of thoroughbreds.

The Germans disappeared round the edge of the ridge. They were met by some scattering shots from Demilion's party. They doubled back, almost riding down the General, who emptied a saddle with a shot from his Mauser pistol. They swerved away from us again and rode out into the desert, the General and Corrie still at their heels.

We were now all clear of the ridge, between it and the sand dunes from which we had started. The scouts extended to assume a horseshoe formation, with its open end to the sand dunes. General Mackenzie with Corrie at his heels was gaily chasing individual Germans in the center. We moved forward gradually, slowly herding pursuers and pursued away from the German lines and nearer to the dunes. Once arrived at that barrier, which was quite impassable at that spot, we would gradually close in and effect a capture.

The sun was now about at its hottest. The hot, sweaty smell of my horse rose to my nostrils, mixed with the fine dust which rose as we trotted forward. But none of us paid much attention to the discomforts, which were no more than normal for daywork in the desert. We were too busy watching the hunt in progress before us.

The German horses were nearly done, while the General's big chestnuts seemed only getting into their stride.

The Germans had at first moved in close formation. The General soon taught them the error of that by sniping them steadily with his Mauser pistol, then galloping away when they dismounted to shoot—the Boer

custom of shooting from the saddle was evidently an art unknown to them. Finally the Germans scattered, every man for himself, trying to work round the points of the advancing horseshoe and get back home. This was the General's opportunity. He and Corrie were after them at a gallop, like two terriers chasing a flock of scared sheep. The rearmost of the Germans was a big man on a small horse. We saw the General ride alongside of him with pistol pointed. The German threw his hands in the air to surrender—and promptly fell off his horse, lying on his back with his hands still pointed heavenward. The General caught the next without pausing in his gallop. He fired his pistol from behind and evidently hit between wind and water, because we saw the German raise himself in the stirrups, clap both hands to his behind and fall off, calling on God loudly as he did so.

By this time the point of our horseshoe was within easy rifleshot of the wall of sand dunes. The three remaining Germans saw that they were surrounded. They came riding toward us with their hands in the air, taking care to pass at some distance from our General, who had halted his horse and was reloading his pistol.

It was only now that I noticed Corrie was missing—we had been too interested in the General's method of German hunting to think of him. I saw him dismounted some distance away, at the spot where the General had unhorsed his first victim.

When I got back there I found Corrie covering the big German with a pistol which was so heavy that he had to use both hands to point it. The German was standing with his hands up and looking worried as the muzzle wobbled from one point of his anatomy to another.

"Did you catch that one, Corrie?" I teased.

"Me and the General," was the reply.

THE DEVIL'S FRYING PAN

THE Boer rebellion was over. Generals Smuts and Botha had smashed the rebels with Boer commandoes, thus avoiding the raising of racial enmity by a further conflict between Boer and British blood. These two now did another very wise thing. General De Wet had been captured and soon afterward he stood trial for treason. He was found guilty—and fined ten shillings. Had they shot him, as he deserved, he would have been a martyr, a name round which to rally every malcontent for generations. As it was he disappeared from the public eye in a storm of laughter and the rebellion went down in South African history as “the Ten Bob Rebellion.”

Ships now began to steam into Luderitz Bay, bringing our badly needed supplies. The days were past when cartridges were counted nearly as carefully as lives. Our bandoliers were full. A plentiful supply of rolling stock for the railway and a shipload of new rails speeded progress through the desert.

In one long night march we bridged the gap to Tchaukaib, just too late to catch the Germans there, who had got wind of our coming.

Five thousand men were camped on the scorching flat around the water tank, from whose top an infantry lookout searched the horizon continually. Five thousand men were waiting for the next move forward, gazing longingly at the black line of the Aus Mountains, fifty miles to the eastward, where the Namib desert ended and the higher, cooler interior plateau began. The daily

train was loaded high with supplies, which were stacked alongside the railway in preparation for the next move.

"Isn't that hellish muck?" remarked Fox, as he let the liquid grease drain through the hole he had perforated with the point of a bayonet in a tin of bully beef, preparatory to opening the tin to get at the solid residue. There was something comical about Fox's figure at the best of times. When he was mounted he had the air of having dropped from the sky onto the horse by accident and being perched there for a moment before falling further. When he walked, his whole body seemed to protest at such a primitive mode of locomotion and call for a car to ride in. At the moment he stood naked, except for riding boots on his feet and a water bottle slung over his shoulder. On his square-cut face was a quizzical look of protest. His toes turned in slightly from long contact with clutch and brake pedals, just as the knees of a horseman bow from long days in the saddle.

"There's a whole pile of medical comforts down by the station," he continued. "I tried to bribe the guard to turn his head away last night. He poked a bayonet at me and told me to get out. Those damned foot sloggers don't like us cavalry much. They think because a man rides a horse he's having a good time and doesn't need any comforts."

"The Lord looks after His children, if they use their heads," remarked Piet Uys, who was lying on his back, trimming a thin leather thong with his knife, in order to mend a weakened stirrup leather.

"Come on, you slim Oom Paul," cried Fox. "Think of something."

"Come, then, I have a plan," said Piet, drawing on his tunic with the double stripe of his newly acquired

corporalship on the sleeve. "The three of you form up outside the tent."

"Squad, march!" he barked in a parade-ground voice when he had lined us up.

"Halt!" he cried as we arrived in front of the sentry who was guarding the supplies.

Reading from an imaginary list on a piece of paper which he took from his pocket, Piet recited:

"One case sardines,
One case salmon,
One case soft biscuits—

Pick them out and be quick about it." Then to the sentry. "Hospital squad; how they spoil those *kerels*."

The sentry nodded and showed us where to find the items.

Most of the five thousand men in camp used to meet the supply train daily. Diversion was limited in Tchau-kaib. The train would appear high up in the western sky, steaming down the slanting rails which the mirage had pulled upward till they seemed to dip as though they came from Mars. Then the men would emerge from where they had lain panting and naked in their tents, don boots, hats, and water bottles, and make their way to the station. They wore their boots because the sand burned their feet, hats because the sun burned their heads, water bottles because that daily quart of water was their most precious possession—it kept the sand from burning their interiors. The officers alone dressed to the extent of wearing their tunics also, because the tunics carried the badge of their authority on the shoulder tabs. There wasn't a pair of trousers visible in Tchau-kaib between 8 A.M., when the "air parade" ended, and 5 P.M., when rations were drawn.

As the train pulled to a stop, the improvident—the

"Foolish Virgins" Piet Uys called them—always lined up beside the engine to catch in their water bottles the trickle of greasy water which flows from a drainpipe at the side, when locomotive engines stand and their internal organs appear to be functioning absent-mindedly. There were usually a hundred or so in that queue, although there was never more than enough water from that source to fill the first three water bottles. Yet the remainder always stood patiently in the blazing sun, for as long as the engine waited, hoping apparently that plague, lightning, or sunstroke might strike down those ahead and give them a chance.

The balance of the army—the Wise Virgins who had not drunk their water—crowded always toward the rear end of the long train of water tanks and supply cars, where an isolated passenger coach was attached. This was one of the moments of greatest interest in the day. Brightly shining staff officers sometimes alighted from it, or more often friends back from base leave or hospital in Luderitzbucht. If the General should emerge, as he sometimes did, it meant there was excitement in the air, a move, or more likely a reconnaissance in force by the mounted men.

One day a bevy of nurses alighted unexpectedly from the coach—among five thousand trouserless males. They had come up for an outing for the day, to see the sights at railhead camp. They succeeded. Those five thousand men hadn't seen a woman for months—they would have walked miles to see one—had they only been trousered. As it was they stampeded wildly for their tents, the only rout sustained by South African troops in the campaign.

"Air parade" began at daybreak and ended about 8 A.M., by which hour the desert mirages had made fly-

ing impracticable for the German planes. The whole force would scatter into the desert in extended formation and pass the time grooming horses, cleaning kit, and betting as to the number of German planes which would come over, the number of bombs they would drop, and whether they would bag any of the field artillery who were left in camp to fight an unequal duel with them.

The average morning's air parade was as good as a football match to us. The referee's whistle for the start of play would sound in the form of three G's on the infantry bugle from the lookout on the water tank—the alarm signal for an air raid.

The German planes were kitelike affairs which made a noise like motor bicycles climbing a hill. They had the best of the game because we had no planes at all, nor any high-angle guns capable of firing at a plane directly overhead.

Our gunners would give them a peppering till they got in too close for the maximum elevation of the guns. Then the gunners would scatter hurriedly, throwing themselves on their faces in the sand and wishing they had been born with less conspicuous hinder parts. The Germans would drop their load of homemade bombs—stuffed with dynamite, scrap iron, horseshoe nails, and any other unpleasant and painful substances they had thought of. The planes would circle over the prostrate gunners like a couple of attenuated and deformed vultures circling over a carcass to make sure that it is dead. Then they would sail for the horizon while the gunners rushed for their guns to get a bit of their own back before the target got out of range.

It was a good show and a diverting one—for all but

the gunners. Even for them it helped to break the deadly monotony of the camp. While it lasted we sat on the side lines and cheered each shot, hoping, when a bomb dropped among the tent lines, that ours would be spared.

CHAPTER VI

GARUB FIGHT

SEVERAL times a week Demilion would lead our patrol out from Tchaukaib camp. We would ride all night toward the German position at the mouth of the gorge which was the only passage through the Aus Mountains to the interior plateau. All next day we would lie hidden behind the crest of some rocky ridge or kopje in the desert, noting German troop movements, ambushing any of their patrols which were not too strong for us to tackle, baking from the blazing sun on our backs and frying from the hot rocks on which we lay, creeping under our horses' bellies for the shade when the sun got overhead. The next night we would ride back to camp to report.

When some German patrol appeared to have become incautious enough to establish a fixed route for its daily sweep through the desert, General Mackenzie would make a reconnaissance in force. On these occasions a couple of thousand Carbineers and Imperial Light Horse would ride up from Luderitzbucht—to keep so many horses at railhead was impossible. A man drank one quart of water daily; a horse drank five gallons. To supply two thousand horses regularly at railhead was beyond the capacity of the railway. They would take part in a sweeping drive, dragging a couple of field guns behind them, capturing any German patrols which happened to fall into their net.

There was one particular German patrol which seemed always to frequent the neighborhood of a rocky ridge, called Garub, some five miles out in the desert from the

wide triangle of cliffs which was the entrance to the Aus gorge. The General decided on a reconnaissance in force to catch them.

There was the usual chill feel about the desert air which we already knew so well from numberless other night marches; the whole desert hereabouts was criss-crossed with our tracks. The rolled overcoat on my saddle bow rubbed the sore spot on my thighs which had been chafed red weeks ago and given no chance to heal. The weight of the crossed bandoliers and the haversack on my shoulders made my back ache as it had ached so many times before. The dust of our passage floated up between the horses and worked down through my nostrils to my throat. The monotonous creak and jingle of cavalry on the march made me sleepy, yet if I slept I should fall from my horse, spend some time catching him, and more time still finding my place near the head of the long column.

What a dismal thing war was. We had been on active service for six months already. We had captured a few hundred square miles of desert which was incapable of supporting human life except by supplies brought in from South Africa. We had had dozens of petty skirmishes with German patrols, killed and taken a few Germans, had a few killed on our side. We scouts had at least had some excitement. But those poor infantry, toiling every day laying rails, or dozing their lives away in the blockhouses which guarded the line every few hundred yards, had not yet seen a shot fired in this campaign, nor would they. It was a horseman's war. The Germans were all mounted. Men on foot cannot catch men on horses; the Boer War had proved that.

Curse the war. When this campaign was over I'd go back to South Africa—try my luck with Winnie Miller.

I believed I stood a chance. We had been corresponding regularly ever since the mails began coming through after the Boer rebellion. I was broke, my concessions in Mozambique had already lapsed for want of funds to keep up the payments. But we would get a start somehow.

A remark from Fox woke me from my dream.

"Thank God we're not trailing those blasted guns to-night."

"That is bad," said Piet Uys. "God sometimes seems to fight on the side of the Amalekites. That is when we need the guns. If those German schelms should get behind the rocks of a kopje—the guns are needed. When I rode in De Wet's commando, fighting the British, we were not afraid of many times our number of riflemen if we had good cover. But when we saw the guns we rode like hell."

As day broke we spread our net of horsemen between the Garub ridge and the mouth of the Aus gorge, the long line enveloping the ridge on three sides. If there was anyone on the ridge they could escape only in the direction of the open desert where we could easily ride them down.

Slowly, as the light strengthened, we rode up the smooth slope of sand toward the jagged wall of rock which formed the crest of the ridge.

Eight hundred yards from the top—seven hundred yards—the nest is empty, another wild-goose chase, ten hours' ride back to camp, all for nothing—six hundred yards—

"Ka-ka-ka-ka-ka," coughed a machine gun from the rocks above.

"Tat-tat-tat-tat-tat," stuttered its mate from beside it. Several others joined the chorus.

"Sst—sst—sst," sighed the bullets past our heads, as though in sorrow at having missed us.

Numbers One, Two and Four of each section hit the ground simultaneously, flat on their bellies without recollection of how they got there. Number Threes galloped off to the rear, each leading three horses.

We had caught a Tartar on the Garub ridge and Garub fight was on.

I wriggled my elbows into a comfortable position, raised my head cautiously, looking for something to shoot. At my movement the sand around me became agitated with little spurts of dust. Something stung my face. I passed my hand down my cheek. Grains of sand were embedded in the skin, thrown up by a bullet. I lay flat again. The dust spurts ceased.

Then, at a blast from a whistle somewhere to the right, the whole line rose as one man, dashed forward thirty yards or so, flung themselves on their bellies again as the machine guns began their coughing.

Piet Uys called me from where he lay a couple of yards to my left. I turned my head gingerly toward him, trying not to attract the attention of the German machine gunners, who I knew were peering through their sights toward us from the protection of the rocks, waiting for some movement to give them an excuse to fire. Piet was plucking branches from a small spiny desert plant which grew within his reach and decorating his hat with them.

"The Lord protects his servants better when they look after themselves a bit," he remarked coolly, donning his hat. "When we rush, the devil-gun fires blindly into the thick of us and does little damage because we are far apart and the gunner is flurried. When we lie down is the danger."

I promptly decorated my hat from a bush near me.

We advanced by short rushes to within four hundred yards of the German position. We were now close enough to see loopholes built in the rock walls which connected the natural defense of boulders around the top of the ridge. Now and then as a puff of wind came down the slope toward us I smelled a scent like the hot engine of a car—it was the heated barrels of machine guns. Occasionally one of those guns would overheat and a small jet of white steam from the water jacket outline itself against the black rocks, drawing a rattle of rifle fire from our prone line, which was answered in turn by a rising crescendo of machine-gun fire from above. The fire on both sides would reach its peak, then die away till complete silence fell once more.

To advance to closer range against those hidden machine guns would obviously mean useless loss of life. By waiting for the darkness we could get close enough to rush the position and swamp the defenders with our numbers. It was nearly noon now. Seven hours to wait. My throat was dry already. The sand beneath me baked my underside while the sun above scorched my upper. I debated whether to chance the movement entailed by reaching for the water bottle slung on my back. I decided against it. Thirst wouldn't kill me, but a bullet might.

There was an order coming down the line from the right. Mackenzie and his staff were over in that direction, I knew. I could see each head turn from right to left as it passed the order on: *PREPARE TO RETIRE.*

Christ! Was the General mad? We'd lose almost as many men by retiring as we would by rushing the position. Besides we could easily stick it out till darkness; then we'd have the game in our hands.

I passed the message on.

At the sound of the whistle the line rose suddenly, as though pushed up by invisible springs, turned and raced madly down the slope to meet the dust cloud thrown up by the Number Threes, who were bringing up the horses at the gallop.

But beyond them was another dust cloud, two dust clouds. From the mouth of the Aus gorge two long columns of Germans were coming at a gallop, not a mile away, already turning inward, forming the arms of a pair of pincers with which to nip us after they had us surrounded.

The German patrol in the rocks had been a bait—we had bitten nicely. The machine guns had been planted on the ridge to hold us in play while we were being surrounded. If we had only brought the pair of field guns which we had trailed all over the desert on other occasions, we could have taken the ridge in an hour and been miles away before those moving columns could come within striking distance of us. But now—it would be touch and go—we would have to gallop like hell to get clear, and run the gauntlet of the machine guns to do it.

The horses met us in a flurry of dust, churning hoofs, and swearing men. Pexton's hatchet face split in a grin as he swung my horse toward me, holding it steady while I mounted.

As we passed close under one end of the ridge the machine guns opened on us again. We galloped through a dust cloud perforated by winging bullets, every man with his spurs rammed home, leaning low on the saddle.

Fox is down, headfirst in the sand. He is up and running hard; not hit apparently, just fallen off. He never could keep his stirrups at a gallop. Piet has caught his horse and brought it back to him, held it while he

mounted. Good for the Boer. God, these Germans are close. Can see their faces, not two hundred yards away, riding abreast of us, trying to turn back the rearguard with which we are riding. What's Demilion up to? Swinging out of our mass toward them . . . crazy devil . . . he'll get caught . . . letting fly at them with his Mauser pistol as he gallops . . . the old Boer trick, shooting on the run . . . Piet is out there too, shooting from the saddle with his rifle . . . got to follow them . . . a German's down . . . a couple more, their horses piling up and slowing the column . . . those Boers can shoot . . . we're pulling clear . . . we're *clear*, by God, and the Germans have halted. Came near to catching us but didn't quite do it.

Once out in the plain we formed up and waited for the enemy. But he had won his rubber for the day and was not going to risk open fighting on the plain where he knew we could outmaneuver him.

A week later we occupied the Garub ridge: horse, foot, and guns this time. But the bird had flown. Bullet splashes round the loopholes testified to the accuracy of our fire—piles of empty cartridge cases inside the fort to the intensity of theirs. We heard afterward that they had lost more men than we in the Garub fight.

DEMILION'S DEATH

WE were now facing the really strong position of Aus, which the Germans evidently intended to dispute. The Aus Mountains, at whose feet we lay, stretched impassable from north to south, waterless, sand blown into weird, fantastic shapes; polished like glass. The only pass was the Aus gorge, twenty miles long, in places only fifty yards wide, reputedly mined. Defending the mouth of the gorge at our end was a system of German trenches whose location we had as yet been unable to determine.

Some British general of the "Death or Glory" school might have launched us at the gorge, to fight our way inch by inch till we won through or were annihilated (gloriously)—another Colenso, Suvla Bay or Passchendaele. But we were led by Boers and fighting according to Boer methods. The strong mixture of French Huguenot blood had transformed into brilliance the stolidity of the original Dutch settler of South Africa. Even the uneducated Boer backvelder was wily and fertile of brain. A century of warfare, almost always against heavy odds, had added a natural genius for war and a policy of economizing human life. The Boer leaders won their campaigns by a dependence on strategy rather than on the hammer blow of the assault. The supreme mobility of South African mounted troops and their fine marksmanship were more valuable weapons than big guns and bayonets. To put it in the language of the rank and file, a Boer leader was more accustomed to "use the inside of his head than the outside."

Our expeditionary force had now accomplished its primary object. By capturing Luderitzbucht we had countered the German invasion of South Africa and brought the invading force spurring back across their own border to face us, before they could effect the junction with the Boer rebels which had been their object. By the clever last-minute change of landing places the German concentration at Swakopmund, which had aimed to annihilate our landing parties, had been eluded. The bulk of that concentration now confronted us at Aus and barred our passage. There was nothing more for us to do but wait until the fertile brains of Botha and Smuts should find some way of breaking the stalemate.

Meanwhile leave was granted to a number of the mounted men, whose usefulness was limited at the moment by the nearness of the German lines.

I jumped at the chance. I would go to Beacon Hill farm and try my luck. Queer how much time I spent thinking about a girl I hadn't seen for nearly eight years.

The morning of my departure I watched Demilion ride out with three men to scout the entrance to the Aus gorge. It was the last time I ever saw him. They stumbled on a concealed German trench and were enfiladed by a machine gun at fifty yards' range. Two troopers and all the horses were killed at the first discharge. The other trooper was wounded, but survived and told me the story of Demilion's end long afterward, when we took our prisoners back at Gibeon fight.

Demilion lay wounded behind his dead horse. A German officer called from the trench.

"Put your hands up, Demilion, we've got you."

"Get your head down, I'm going to fight," replied

Demilion, calling by name the German, whom he had known in the days when they had fought the Herrera Hottentots together.

Demilion's body was riddled with machine-gun bullets and the Germans buried him where he fell. Cold, ruthless, utterly daring and very lovable, he was one of South Africa's great guerrilla fighters.

"We could have spared a brigade better," cried the General when he heard the news.

It was evening before the slow supply train put me in Luderitzbucht, where I was to catch my boat next day.

Hungry for something to eat besides bully beef and dog biscuit, I went to the South African Garrison Institute to buy sardines, cheese, raisins, and half-a-dozen other delicacies about which I had dreamed in the long night marches. The South African Garrison Institute was installed in Kapp's Hotel, the same Kapp's Hotel where Walter Airey and I had celebrated, after our memorable walk along the beach from Conception Bay, almost eight years before. I had lost track of Walter of late years.

The old lounge had been converted into a store. Shelves of tinned goods lined the walls. Behind the counter civilians, the first I had seen for many months, attended to the wants of soldiers who were ordering everything from ginger beer to curry powder, to sprinkle on their ration biscuits in an attempt to make them taste like food. I walked up to the counter and gazed around, awaiting my turn. I hadn't realized lately that there were so many good things to eat in the world.

"You wouldn't be looking for a passage on a guano schooner, sir?" came a voice in my ear.

I started. There was Walter, in a white apron, serving sardines and cheese—the same wry grin upon his face that he had worn the day we found the first diamond.

“What the devil are you doing here?” I asked a little later, as he helped me to whiskey in a tin mug in his room, one of the old guest rooms of the hotel.

“I came after diamonds.”

“Diamonds, in wartime?”

“The monthly shipments to Germany from the Luderitzbucht diamond area before the war used to average about one hundred thousand pounds sterling in value,” he recited. “When the war broke out a shipment of that value was waiting in Luderitzbucht for the next Woermann liner to Hamburg. It was still waiting in Luderitzbucht when you blokes rushed the town. I found out that the shipment had been cached here in Kapp’s Hotel, while I was in Capetown, waiting for a passage home to join up—I’d been in Namaqualand—rumors of diamonds there. I had a devil of a time getting in as a civilian to Luderitzbucht. I could have joined up easily enough, now the rebellion’s over and reinforcements are being sent here. But chasing round the Namib desert after Germans wasn’t going to help me find diamonds hidden in Luderitzbucht. There was only one way to get into this country as a civilian—as a volunteer worker in the South African Garrison Institute, which by the devil’s own luck happened to be located in the very building I wanted to search. After some wangling I managed it. Tomorrow I’m off back to the Cape.”

“Find them?”

“Found the place, but someone had been there first.

Maybe some German's got them back through your lines. They'll be found in Windhoek, unless I miss my guess."

"Where were they?"

He moved the wardrobe away from the wall. With his knife he pried out a piece of the wainscoting which had been neatly fitted in.

"Doesn't that smell like a diamond cache to you?" he asked. "Curse the blasted diamonds," he cried suddenly. "I've wasted too many years on them. I always guess right but always just miss the bus. I'm through with them for good."

Long afterward I read in a South African paper that "a parcel of diamonds had been discovered in Windhoek, which was reputed to be a shipment which had been waiting for despatch to Europe at the time of the South African landing in Luderitzbucht. The diamonds had been appropriated by the South African Government as spoils of war."

Walter and I traveled on the same boat to Capetown next day. I have never seen him since we stood on the Capetown dock again for the second time. He got caught up in the meshes of the war and spewed out again, the worse for wear. He was still alive a few years ago, I heard—manager of a trading company, somewhere in Rhodesia.

Two days after leaving Capetown I stepped off the train at Estcourt station. Winnie met me with the car and drove me to Beacon Hill. When I left to rejoin after my two weeks' leave was up I was an engaged man, to be married as soon as the war was over.

FIGHTING DIRTY

I GOT back from my leave just in time for the big move, for which we had waited so long. The stalemate was over. General Vanderventer, with some commandoes of hard-riding Boer burghers, had plunged into the western desert from Upington in South Africa, crossed the Orange River into German territory, and was threatening at Keetmanshoek the communications of the German force which held the gorge before us.

General Botha had sailed with a strong expeditionary force for Swakopmund, forced a landing, and was holding the northern German force in play and preventing them from sending reinforcements to oppose Vanderventer. Our own immediate opponents were evacuating Aus and scuttling back to pass Keetmanshoek before Vanderventer should cut them off. Boer strategy was working.

Major Grey, late of the Carbineers, had been given command of the scouts. He was a splendid soldier but lacked Demilion's knowledge of the country. He was reputed to be the best rifleshooter in South Africa. He may have been, on the rifle range, but I would have backed that wily old Boer corporal Piet Uys against any man I ever met at a moving mark on the veld.

I was scared, dead scared, as I rode in the first section at the head of the long column which was marching up the Aus gorge. There were two troopers ahead—"pointers" in military parlance—but the flanking parties, which military tactics and ordinary prudence

called for, would have had to fly to scale those smooth, beetling rock walls on either side.

Demilion had said the gorge was mined. There was an uneasy prickling in the soles of my feet as I waited for the upward push which I imagined would herald the explosion that would send us sailing skyward.

"You're a miner, Pexton," remarked Fox. "How hard does one have to step on a mine to send it off?"

Pexton was staring at the rocky walls fixedly. He did not hear.

"Hey, Pex," Fox tried again. "How do they set off a mine?"

Pexton turned. "Contact mine—dig hole in road—fill cavity with explosive—old nails, stones, scrap iron, horseshoes, anything that's solid and useless—place on explosive a glass vessel containing acid—resting on vessel set small metal rod which protrudes above surface of ground about a quarter of an inch after hole is filled in—someone steps on metal rod, which is hidden in dust of road—breaks glass—acid escapes and falls onto explosive—sends everything to glory." Pexton turned his attention to the rocks again.

Piet Uys shook his head. "I do not know about mines. They are dirty fighting and we did not use such things in the Boer War; neither did the British. But I wish we were out of this place. One good sniper up in those rocks could send a lot of us to hell without any mines. I do not like this gorge. It is a trap."

"God, my horse does step heavy," grumbled Fox. "Never noticed it before. If he ever steps on one of those metal rods . . ."

One of the scouts fifty yards ahead threw up his hand. They both reined their horses in, staring at the ground.

Every troop leader in that long column behind us threw up his hand also. We could hear the jingle of accouterments pass back down the gorge as the whole column came to a stop, five miles of it or so—horse, foot, guns, and wagon train—five thousand troops and their accessories.

At Grey's order our section spurred forward at his heels.

One of the pointers was sawing with a knife at a thin, brown insulated wire which led from the dust of the road into some bushes which screened the mouth of a side gully.

"Cut it quick"—in a strangled croak from Grey.

We rode into the side gully with our rifles at the ready. Within fifty yards it ended in a blank rock wall. On a flat stone sat a square box with brass terminals to which the wire was connected. Several cigarette butts testified that someone had been waiting to press down the switch which was attached to the box and spring the mine under us as we passed. But apparently his nerve had failed him and he had gone. The engineers found later that a two-hundred-yard stretch of the road had been mined. If that switch had been pressed before the wire had been cut, several hundred men and horses would have been blown to bits.

There were contact mines in the road, too. A little later there was a dull explosion behind us somewhere. An artillery mule had stepped on one of the little metal rods and a gun had been blown to pieces with its mules and crew. Thousands of men and thousands of horses had just marched over that little metal rod without happening to touch it.

The sun was low and the air was chill with five thousand feet of altitude when the gorge suddenly widened

and we saw open country before us—a barren, stony plain in which huddled a little tin-roofed town, Aus, the German stronghold—the word which had been on our lips all these months, every time we looked at the mountain wall to the eastward.

A cheer rose from the head of the column, rumbling backward between the rocky walls of the gorge till it was lost in the distance.

"Trees—they're green—there are only four of them, but they are really green," cried Fox enthusiastically. "There'll be wells too. God, I'm dry. My water bottle has been empty for hours."

"You should have saved your water," remarked Piet Uys.

"What for, old Praise the Lord? We'll be drinking in a few minutes."

"Because the Lord has made no man such a fool as the German seems to be this day. He snipes not from places which the Lord made for sniping. He mines the road to blow us up, then changes his mind and lets us pass. If there were no water here he knows that our horses could never stand the march back to Garub. If he has left us water to drink in these wells he is such a fool that the devil must have made him."

"But he can't have taken the water away with him."

"In the western desert the jackals breed. When they become too many and kill our sheep we wait for a dry season when the water holes are few, then we poison the water holes and the jackals die."

"What! You think the wells are poisoned? God, we'd never stand the march back. We've marched ten hours in that cursed gorge and we're all in."

The head of the dense column spread as it emerged from the gorge and swept through the town, which was

absolutely deserted. The Germans had taken everything eatable with them; even the dogs were gone.

"My poor brute is going to sleep in a stable tonight," remarked a Carbineer officer, opening the door of someone's stable and sending in his unsaddled horse with a friendly slap on its rump. He closed the door and walked away to send a trooper with a bucket of water from a near-by well. He was hardly clear of the building when an explosion flung him flat on his face. The stable had been mined—horse and building were flying through the air in indistinguishable fragments.

"That hat's mine," cried a ragged trooper, flinging his worn hat from his head and dismounting to grab a nice new one, which had apparently fallen from the head of some German. Inside the hat was a string, which led to a switch, which caused a spark, which touched off a mine and sent the trooper where hats are not needed.

The whole place was full of such booby traps. During the few days we were there we heard occasional explosions, which meant that someone had been maimed or blown to bits. We got so that we shied across the road at the sight of a hat, made a detour of yards at the sight of a tin, and couldn't have been coaxed inside a building by the promise of paradise.

Meantime water was the first question. The long column kept emerging from the gorge like some endless snake leaving its hole in the rocks. More and more horsemen were clustering round the wells, pushing onto the fixed bayonets of the water guard which had been posted from among the first troops arriving, holding back horses which pawed and tossed their heads frantically at the scent of water, holding tin cups ready and shifting water bottles across their backs so that they could be more readily filled.

"Back, men, back," shouted Colonel Mackay of the Carbineers, as he stood beside the regimental doctor who was watching the first bucket come up. "Keep back till the water's tested. It may be poisoned for all we know."

"God, Colonel, we've got to drink it," cried a voice from the crowd. "Our tongues are hanging out and our horses are finished."

The doctor looked carefully at the water in the bucket and his nose wrinkled. It looked lovely to me from where I sat on my horse. True, it was a bit discolored, but what of that? The smell reminded me of a hospital and a garbage pail at the same time. I glanced at Piet, the prophet of evil. He was shaking his water bottle reflectively; it gave forth the happy gluck-gluck-gluck of a half-filled vessel.

The doctor sniffed at the water. Then he spat expressively. He took a cup from a trooper and sipped; his nose wrinkled. A long sigh went up from the crowd as the cup went to his lips. Those men were thirsty—not the thirst of civilization, which at the worst is a dryness of the mouth and throat. Ours was real thirst, where every nerve, every bone, every bit of substance of the body shrieked for moisture.

"The water is poisoned with carbolic," the doctor reported. "There is something else in it, too—smell it but can't identify it."

"Will it kill the men?" asked Colonel Mackay abruptly.

"Can't say till they try it—no means of analyzing it—may not be strong enough. But on the other hand it might kill them—filthy stuff."

"It may kill them, but they've got to drink it," cried

the Colonel. "There's no going back from here; few of us would ever reach Garub."

He grabbed a cup from a trooper, filled it, waved a salute to the crowd, and put it to his lips.

It was awful. One cupful was as much as the strongest could stand. The smell of carbolic to this day gives my stomach a convulsion. But we survived it.

Hour after hour we stood there, winding up buckets for horses which tossed their heads and pawed after a few gulps, for men who gagged, cursed, and spat after a mouthful or two. But they got enough moisture to tide them over. As the water level in the well was lowered and sweet water came filtering in, the carbolic taste began to diminish but the smell remained as bad as ever.

When the well was nearly empty and only the last of the crowd remained unwatered, our bucket began to drag against some metal substance in the bottom of the well. We improvised a grapnel from the wire of a near-by fence and began to fish. Item one was a sanitary bucket. The next lucky dip was a dead cat. Other defunct cats and dogs followed. The final stroke was the decayed and dripping corpse of a small pig.

"Those Germans do fight dirty," remarked Piet Uys.

AN EPIC MARCH

THE military situation of the Southwest African campaign, at the time of our occupation of Aus, can best be visualized by imagining the field of war as a parallelogram, standing on one of its shorter sides. At the top left-hand or northwest corner is Swakopmund, where General Botha has just forced a landing and is facing a strong German force.

Aus is about the middle of the bottom, or south side, of the parallelogram. Keetmanshoek is at the southeast corner. The southern German force, the one which has been opposing us from the beginning of the campaign, is racing to pass Keetmanshoek before General Vanderventer and his fast-riding Boer commandoes can emerge from the western desert beyond and cut them off.

The left-hand or western half of the parallelogram is the Namib desert. We have passed that now and are thankful for the fact. The right-hand half, which we are entering, is a high, cold plateau, giving scant pasturage to the flocks and herds of German ranchers and to those of the few remaining bands of Hottentots which have survived their wars with the Germans of the previous decade. Scattered settlements dot the plateau, built beside the few natural water holes, or along the course of the Great Fish River, whose sandy bed roughly bisects the plateau from north to south and finally joins the Orange River, the border between South African and German territory. The Great Fish is a river actually only every ten years or so, when the rainfall in the interior has been sufficient to make it flow upon the sur-

face. Normally it is a dry, sandy river bed, with water percolating through the sand and forming surface pools at intervals of a few miles.

The names of the settlements in this barren land read like a glossary of the Bible—Bethany, Beersheba, Gibeon, Reheboth—reminders of the Moravian missionaries who pursued their vocation among the Hottentots before the German occupation.

As I have already recounted, the Germans were in full retreat along the railway line from Aus to Keetmanshoek, where they would turn north with the railway, with the object of effecting a junction with their northern force which was facing General Botha. If they could do this, their combined forces would be strong enough to make things hot for Botha's expeditionary force—they might even succeed in pushing it into the sea. Then they could turn and deal with us at their leisure.

Our only hope of catching the retreating Germans was to cut across country and try to intercept them, a three-hundred-mile ride, most of it over country which was little traversed and regarded by the Germans as impassable for a military force. True, Demilion had once told me that South African troops were hardy enough to travel this route by a trail which he knew—but Demilion was buried at Garub. We never needed him worse than now.

The beginning of a solution came when Piet Uys and I found the Hottentot. We had been sent on a scout along the railway line to feel for the German rear. We had ridden about twenty miles, according to the kilometer posts along the railway, and had seen nothing but an abandoned wagon or two and the familiar gap in the center of each rail where the Germans had blown

out a chunk. As we were about to turn back, our horses scented water and pressed forward, leading us into a narrow gully with precipitous sides.

"*Paas op*," cried Piet suddenly, whipping his rifle from the bucket, as he rounded the bend ahead of me.

There was a figure standing beside a little spurt of water, finger thick, which leaped from the face of the precipice into a hollow worn in the rock below. A Hottentot, unarmed, so we lowered our rifles. Tall, gaunt, and yellow, his bare head was covered with sparsely scattered tufts of kinky hair. He was dressed in a tattered flannel shirt and trousers with cowhide sandals on his feet, and beside him stood a scarecrow of a horse. The Hottentot made no attempt to escape. It would have been useless, as the only outlet to the gully was the one by which we had entered. He was one of Chief Witbooi's men, he told us in broken, guttural Dutch. He had been sent to meet General Mackenzie with a message from his chief, had hidden from the retreating Germans, and was now making for our lines.

He rode before us to the General's headquarters, which was under one of the flat-topped thorn trees of Aus.

"It's a question of water," General Mackenzie was remarking to one of his staff as we brought the Hottentot to him, some hours later. "If there is enough water for the horses we can get through with a sporting chance of cutting off the Germans—but it's a God-awful march to ask troops to make."

His face lit up eagerly when he saw our captive.

"Can men and horses travel across the mountains to Beersheba?" he asked.

"Ya, Baas," assented the Hottentot.

"Do you know the road?"

"Ya, Baas."

"Describe it."

The Hottentot squatted on his haunches. He smoothed a patch of sand and sprinkled it with pebbles, evidently indicating a stony plain. In the middle of the patch he punched a small hole with his finger and spat into it. At the further end of the patch he repeated the process. Then, beyond, he heaped up sand in a miniature ridge and on the top of the ridge he made a hole, but refrained from spitting into it. Beyond the ridge, on the level, he drew a wavy line with his finger, leaving a groove which meandered like a river.

"Bethany," he explained, pointing to the first hole. "Besondemed," pointing to the second. He skipped the hole on the ridge and put his finger down on the meandering line. "Beersheba—Great Fish River."

"Is there water for many men—many horses?" asked the General, who was squatted on his heels beside him by this time. They looked like two oddly mated old boys playing a game in the sand.

"Bethany, much water, no grass. Besondemed, some water by digging, much grass. Beersheba, plenty water, plenty grass, good country but too many Germans."

"Is there water in the hole on top of the mountains, the one you skipped?"

"When there has been rain, some water—bad water. My people call Stinkfontein—water stink. When no rain, no water."

"Is there water now?"

The Hottentot shrugged his shoulders expressively and pulled a foul old pipe from his pocket, eying wistfully the equally foul briar which protruded from the General's white whiskers like a tree trunk from a snow-drift. The General rashly handed him his tobacco

pouch, which the Hottentot carefully emptied into his pocket and handed back, after filling his pipe.

There was some further conversation. The final information obtained amounted to the fact that Beersheba was something over two hundred miles distant; that the road branched off from the railway at Kuibis, as the Hottentot called the spring where we had found him; that from there the water holes were about fifty miles apart; that the one he called Stinkfontein was problematical; that once Beersheba was reached there were good water and grass as far as a little town called Gibeon, about a hundred miles farther on.

"We'll chance it," cried the General, standing up and ramming onto his head the hat which had fallen as he bent over the map. "Take the blasted 'Tottie with us and shoot him if he's lied. Damned if I'm going to sit still in Aus when there's a chance to cut those bastards off."

"Ya, Baas," the 'Tottie grinned. "Mc know road—me fetch'um Beersheba you give me five pounds—English money."

"By the hairs on God's belly, if you bring us to Beersheba you can name your own bloody price," the General roared.

That night we moved. There was only one day's rations to be had—all that had come through from Garub as yet—one pound of bully beef and six biscuits per man—nothing for the horses. Our poor beasts had been living on some hay the Germans had left behind, but that was finished now. Three thousand horsemen marched, leaving the infantry in Aus.

Twenty miles along the road was Kuibis. We watered our horses at the spring where we had found the 'Tot-

tie. We left Kuibis for Bethany soon after dawn—fifty miles to Bethany.

We were riding over a flat, stony plain. The stones were all rounded like ostrich eggs and packed as close as on a shingle beach. Now I knew why the 'Tottie had sprinkled pebbles over the patch of sand he had smoothed to make his map. The cold wind chilled our marrows as we rode in the dawn—we were five thousand feet above sea level now and the South African winter was beginning. This was late May of 1915.

Fox came riding up from the rear of the column where he had been on some errand.

"Save your horseshoes," he remarked, falling into his place beside Pexton. "Every farrier is back at the rear, tacking on cast shoes. They've run out of shoes already and they shoe no more horses unless the rider brings a shoe."

"This land is cursed." Piet agreed with Fox for once. "There can be no hell or the Germans would have gone there long since to escape from their own hellfire of a desert. Now we have passed the desert we are still in hell . . . a cold hell."

Hour after hour we plodded over the endless stony plain; the expanse of round pebbles was broken only by an occasional stunted thornbush, which seemed shrinking into the ground with shame to be found growing in such a place.

Night caught us still plodding. We were doing barely three miles an hour. The Germans must be doing double that along their longer route, with the railways to help them move their tired horses ahead by relays. When our horses got tired they would have to drop behind and stay there.

About midnight the 'Tottie led us through thicker growing thornbushes to a big spring-fed pool, whose still surface reflected the stars.

"Bethany, Baas," he croaked with satisfaction, and curled down to sleep beside the trooper whose care he was and to whom he was tied.

We watered our thirsty, tired horses, unsaddled them, and tied them to ropes stretched between the thorn trees. We scattered through the deserted mission settlement, pulling the scarce tufts of withered grass and bringing as much as we could find to our horses. I didn't like the look of those horses. They had been fat and shiny when we had left Garub. Their coats were staring now. They stood with their heads hung, as though hopeless. Seventy miles behind us, one hundred and fifty more to cover to Beersheba. What if we found that doubtful water hole dry!

At daybreak we marched again, winding between small hills on a sandy road which showed ancient traces of wheel marks. Those wheel marks cheered us a lot.

The road topped a rise. I pulled my horse aside to look back and noticed the General riding with his staff, a hundred yards or so behind. God, he was tough, I thought. He sat his saddle as erect as a boy in spite of over sixty years. Semiconsciously I straightened my own shoulders, already beginning to be bowed with fatigue. A man like that put heart into one.

Behind the General and his staff plodded the solid column of the Carbineers' brigade—their smart black boots hidden under a thick coating of gray dust. Then, after a short gap, the Imperial Light Horse. Then the guns, six of them. Mackenzie would never leave them behind again. The Natal Light Horse were the rear-guard that day, raising a cloud of dust behind the guns.

Back of them all was a long line of stragglers on foot. Some were leading played-out or lame horses, fighting doggedly to get them to the next water, in the hope that a drink and a night's rest would enable them to carry on. Some were on foot, their horses dead. These men, dismounted, were out of the campaign, but struggling on to water, where they might find game and survive by their rifles, until they could work their way back to the base we had left in Aus.

Three brigades of horse and one battery of guns had started from Aus two days ago. Their original numbers—around three thousand—were already thinned, as shown by these stragglers behind. The Germans must be at least as strong as we—a hundred and fifty miles' more marching before we could meet them—no one but Mackenzie could ever pull it off—no one but Mackenzie would ever have dared to try it—unless it had been Demilion.

About three o'clock next morning the 'Tottie led us between high, looming hills to a dry, sandy river course.

"Besondemed," he grunted.

"But there's no water!"

"Dig, Baas, dig."

On his knees he started scooping out dirt with his hands like a bedraggled mongrel dog digging after a mole. When his hole was about two feet deep he stopped. Water was filtering into it, seeping through the sand. He plunged headfirst into the hole and the noise of his drinking floated out past his legs.

We followed the 'Tottie's example and thus, slowly, we watered our horses, filling their canvas nosebags from the bottom of holes with the tin cups from our haversacks.

The 'Tottie had been right too about the grass in

Besondemed. There was plenty of it growing knee-high among the flat-topped thornbushes with which the little valley was studded. We turned the horses loose, posting a guard at the end of the valley to keep them from straying. All next day we rested, gaining strength for the push over the mountains to the water hole called Stinkfontein—which might be dry.

We left at sundown, climbing upward on a goat track—the wheel marks which had raised our hopes of a reasonably good road had ended at Besondemed. All night we marched, halting for five minutes each hour to breathe our horses, which were displaying new vigor from the feed they had had. Cold. The water froze solid in our water bottles that night and we shivered in our ragged clothes. The stiff cloth of my riding breeches was as hard as though frozen. A continuous powdering of fine dust had settled on the sweat-sodden cloth, working into the material and setting like concrete. My legs chafed with every movement. The sole of one of my riding boots had been ripped off among the rocks some days since and I had wrapped a piece of hide from a dead horse around my foot. My shirt had rotted from the waist down, and my tunic was worn through by the rubbing of my shoulder blades. Our overcoats had been left behind at Aus to lighten our horses.

At daybreak we were on a high upland. The air was still. We rode continually in an impenetrable cloud of fine dust of our own raising, which added to our thirst. The smell of our own unwashed bodies always accompanied us. Few of us had had opportunity to wash even our faces, let alone shave, since leaving Luderitzbucht nine months before; one quart of water daily, our desert ration, doesn't leave much for such amenities. Our hair was matted and stiff like sheep's wool before shearing.

Our horses were emaciated in spite of yesterday's feed. Their flanks were shrunken and their hipbones sticking out till we could have hung our hats on them. They plodded forward, their heads hanging. They were starving, poor brutes. One day's feed in four was not enough to keep them going.

And so were we starving. We had drawn one day's rations four days ago. We still had days to march before we could intercept the Germans and fight them for their supplies. If we were too late to catch them, they would have swept the country clean as they went, leaving us to die, with neither food nor strength to return the way we had come, or to follow them.

This was such a march as had made Boer commandoes famous above all other troops for their mobility. But we were marching without the *biltong* which the Boer burghers always carried—that strip of dried meat in one's saddlebags made all the difference. A piece as big as one's forearm would keep a man going for a couple of weeks. Bully beef and biscuit are a poor substitute for that—and we had neither the one nor the other.

But it was water we needed more than food. If we found no water before night many of the horses would die. If the water hole on which we pinned our hopes should fail us, most of us would die also, as only the very strongest among us would be able to retrace their steps to Besondemed.

Some time in the afternoon we halted by a rocky depression under a small cliff.

"Stinkfontein, Baas," barked the Hottentot excitedly. "There is water—can smell stink."

I could certainly smell something foul but could see no water. The hole seemed filled with caked mud. But

the horses smelled water. They were pulling at their bits, snorting and pawing in their eagerness.

The Hottentot shuffled stiffly to the edge of the dried-up-looking pool and struck at the surface with a stick. The stick broke through with a liquid plop. Water! But Christ, what water! Through the coating of dried goats' dung which the 'Tottie had broken floated a stench of carrion. Beneath was liquid—the dung had saved it from evaporating. Cool and green it was. It would have raised roses in the most barren of gardens. It was liquid manure. Three mouthfuls of it were as much as even we could stand; after that it made us gag. But the horses drank it and were saved.

"Look at that rock floating in the pool," remarked Fox, as we were filling our water bottles preparatory to moving on.

Piet Uys prodded the mysterious round object with a stick. It gave off a hissing sound when perforated. Slowly it turned and began to sink, displaying for a moment above the surface the horned and bearded features of the father of all he-goats.

"Alamagtag," groaned Piet and spat expressively. "It is well named the spring that stinks."

But the 'Tottie rushed into the water eagerly and dragged the gruesome carcass out.

"Eatun—belly empty," he cried, his parchment-yellow face suddenly expressive.

"Drop it, you dirty bastard," shouted the trooper to whom he was tied, striking him in the face. "It's bad enough to have to ride with you without having to smell that on your breath."

Weakly we trekked on all that afternoon. Toward evening the high, bleak plain began to slope from us. We had topped the divide. Less than fifty miles before

us lay Beersheba—all downhill. More than one hundred and seventy miles behind us. Horses tired but still going. Mackenzie had taken a long chance but, by God, he was going to get away with it. If only we could arrive in time to stop those Germans. Our empty bellies twisted at the thought of the food in their wagons.

Before night we stood on the edge of the plateau. The mountain dropped away at our feet in a series of rocky ledges without sign of a path—what a place to get down in the dark! But far away and below was a flat plain with a strip of green bush meandering through it, marking the course of the Great Fish River. Along that strip ran the railway. Five miles this side of it was Beersheba, invisible from here, to be surprised and dealt with before we should ride out into the plain to meet the German main body.

Leading our mounts, we stumbled downward through the darkness. Step by step. Ledge by ledge. Feeling forward with our feet for the edge. Slithering down onto the ledge below. Pulling your horse toward you while someone hit him on the rump till he slid down on top of you, crushing your foot as like as not. Hour after hour. Ledge after ledge. Men cursing. Horses excited and fractious.

Behind us the best part of a brigade of men were hanging to the wheels of the guns, hanging to drag ropes, letting them down slowly. One gun broke loose and came crashing down past us, bouncing from ledge to ledge till it broke into fragments, which we could hear rolling and bouncing onward far below us.

Over at last. The columns formed on the plain and marched forward. In the gray dawn a little white town lay before us—Beersheba—we had made it. Two hundred and twenty miles in five days on one day's rations.

Much less by the map but our trail had zigzagged to take advantage of the country.

Quietly a cordon of mounted men moved round the town till it was encircled. Lights began to show here and there in the windows; early risers were stirring. There were people in those houses. There must be German soldiers in the town too, but evidently our circle had been too wide flung and too silent to alarm the German pickets.

A telephone post confronted us, like a long, black finger pointing to the paling sky above. Fox shinned up with the speed of a telephone linesman and cut the wire, which fell among our horses with a slight jingle.

"Let those bastards call for help now all they want to," he grumbled as he remounted.

We waited quietly for daylight, till we could see to shoot. Then slowly the circle closed. A shot from the other side of town. A picket had spotted us at last. We quickened our pace, pushing our horses to a slow canter. A machine gun began to stutter off to our right. A quick burst of rifle fire from the same direction silenced it. Now we were galloping in a confused torrent down the wide street of the village. Half-clad men and women rushed about, holding up their hands. Pexton clubbed a German with his rifle butt as he drew a bead on Fox with his pistol from a house corner.

Beersheba was taken. Not a man had got away to warn the German column which we hoped was riding up the road that ran five miles to the eastward. The prisoners were herded in the market place. Fifty men, selected by picking the nearest-to-exhausted horses, were told off to garrison the town and act as prison guard. They moved the rest of us out of town, grumbling.

There must be food in those houses, but still they moved us on. The three brigades formed up in as many separate columns and started across the plain, the scouts acting as a thin screen half a mile ahead.

The force moved slowly, the horses snatching at the tufts of grass which grew plentifully hereabouts. We were soon entering the fringe of bush which bordered the river a few hundred yards deep on either side.

After the country we had traversed the bush was fairyland, the first expanse of green we had seen. As we approached the river the horses grew frantic with the smell of water and we could hardly hold them from breaking into a gallop. A long, green pool, rippling in the breeze, stretched for some hundreds of yards in the center of the wide, sandy bed of the river.

"Paas op, Baas," shrieked the Hottentot excitedly, as we began to push our horses down the sandy stretch to the pool. "Stop—bad place—horses drown in sand—my people lose plenty goats here one time."

He had halted us just in time. There was quicksand along the water's edge. One or two of our horses began to sink slowly as they halted, but they were near enough to firm sand to get clear easily. He led us under the bank for a short distance till he found a safe route to the water.

We rode our horses in belly-deep, then flung ourselves into the water, clothes and all, letting it sink into our parched bodies while we plunged our heads in time after time, drinking till our bellies became less attenuated and we could feel them swelling and tightening our belts.

Before we finally crossed a guard was posted beyond the quicksand to warn the oncoming columns of the danger. We had hardly climbed the farther bank, however,

before we heard a great crashing of the undergrowth behind us and a shouting of men.

"The crazy fools are galloping to the water," remarked Fox.

"Their horses have smelled water—stampeded," corrected Piet. "Now we shall see something bad."

Several hundred horses crashed from the fringe of bush at a gallop, their riders, in Imperial Light Horse uniform, laughing and trying only halfheartedly to obey the order to pull them in, which the General was bellowing somewhere to the rear. They almost rode down the guard we had posted. They were as eager as their horses to reach the water and disregarded the guard's shouted warning.

As they neared the edge of the water some of the foremost horses began to sink, plunging and rearing in an endeavor to free their feet.

Others behind pressed on among them, maddened by the smell of water. In a few moments there was a heaving mass of screaming horses slowly sinking in the quicksand. Many of their riders dismounted, trying to help their beasts. They too began to sink, cursing and shouting for help.

Help was soon forthcoming from the rear ranks and from the columns to right and left. Stirrup leathers were hastily buckled together into long straps, which were flung to the sinking men. Helpers went down among them, using the bodies of the sinking horses for steppingstones, jumping from heaving body to heaving body, catching upflung arms, dropping the noosed straps around waists so that those on firm ground could drag out their sinking comrades. All the men were saved before attention could be paid to the horses. By that

time most of the poor brutes had sunk beyond help, their long necks weaving in the air in a last despairing effort before the quaking sand stifled their last screams of terror. Only a few could be saved from those nearest the edge.

The whole horrid scene had lasted only a few minutes. We turned and rode into the bush with the dying screams of those sinking horses in our ears. There had been no time for us to offer help from our position across the river—there had been helpers enough anyway. But over a hundred horses had been lost. Over a hundred Imperial Light Horsemen were out of the fight which would begin when we met the Germans. Those dismounted men were condemned to live by their rifles until they and the guard in Beersheba could be supplied with food by the railway—and hundreds of miles of rails must have been destroyed by the retreating Germans. No men on foot could make their way back to Aus by the route we had traversed.

From the farther side of the bushy fringe of the river we looked out on another dry plain, similar to the one we had crossed. A mile or so away we could see the railway crossing a gulley by a short bridge. Near it a wagon road curved downward toward us over the crest of a hill.

The Germans must be on that road somewhere. But they had either passed us, or not yet arrived, as no dust cloud advertised the movement of troops in the vicinity.

We urged our horses forward, eager to know our fate. We found the dust of the road churned deep with footprints and scored with wheel marks. The Germans had passed.

A little farther up the road we found where they had

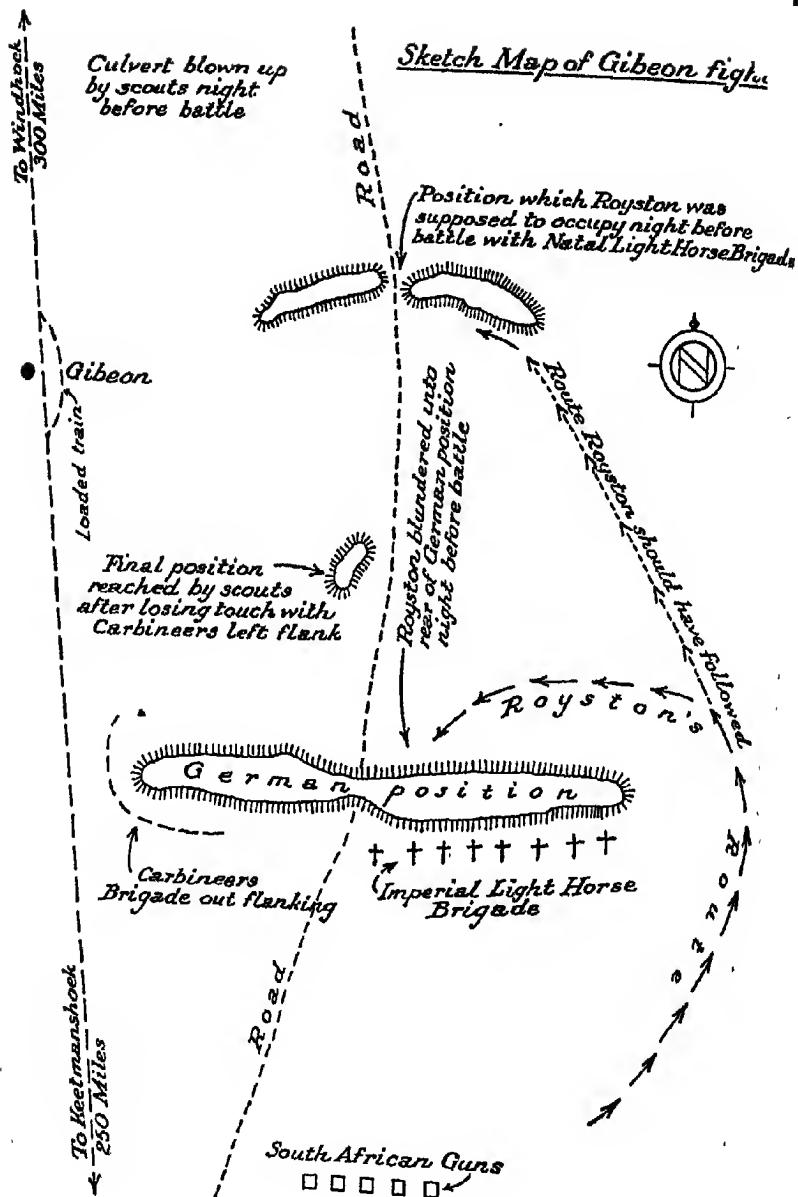
camped for the night. The ground was pocked with little black patches where their fires had been. In the heart of some white ashes I scraped and found a live spark or two. It was evident that they had camped here the night before. If, as was probable, they had moved on at day-break, it meant that we were only four hours too late to intercept them. *TOO LATE!* The full implication of it struck me like a blow. All the agony of the last few days had been wasted. A moment before I had been keyed up by excitement, strong and eager. Now I felt what I actually was. A starved man, exhausted by overexertion and hardship, mounted on a skeleton horse which could not live more than a few days unless he had feed and rest.

The columns trotted up with a clank and jingle, with something still left of the swank and flourish of crack troops which they had carried when we marched out of Garub eight days before. They slumped visibly as they sensed the meaning of those tracks in the road and dismounted in silence. We were too hard hit even to curse. We camped silently on the same spot the Germans had occupied, kindling small fires for the sake of warmth, from the live coals the Germans had left, scavenging among the grass for occasional bits of bread and sausage which our well-fed enemy had thrown away.

A man with an untanned black goatskin on his shoulders was moving toward the tree under whose shade the General was lying. I knew that goatskin. It had followed the General on the march, on the shoulders of his Zulu cook. Now the cook carried in his hand, sorrowfully, a couple of corn cobs. They were blackened by fire and caked with dirt and the last vestige of grain was gone from them. It was the General's dinner, he told me,

shaking his woolly head in despair. He would pound them between stones, then boil them. He hoped the General would eat them because he had had no food to serve him for many days.

Sketch Map of Gibeon fight



GIBEON FIGHT

THAT same evening General Mackenzie sat on his big chestnut charger on the Gibeon road. A bare toe protruded from one of his riding boots. A piece of untanned white goatskin was roughly sewed into the seat of his riding breeches. His face was gaunt and he seemed to have aged ten years in a week, but his back was as straight as that of a young man. Before him, what was left of three brigades of mounted infantry slumped on their horses, hungry, ragged, tired, and unshaven.

His voice was very quiet, even gentle, as he addressed us, in contrast to his usual blustering manner.

"Men, you have just completed a great march. You have marched by the map two hundred and thirty miles in a few hours over five days. You have done it on one day's rations. Unfortunately we have arrived too late at this spot, where we hoped to intercept the enemy. The Germans have passed this point and are half-a-day's march to the northward. If they escape us they may seriously endanger General Botha's force at Swakopmund. By following the Germans northward we may be able to surprise them, as I do not believe they are aware of our presence. We march tonight. You are hungry. Your only hope of rations is to take them from the enemy. There are signs of game in the bush along the river, but there must be no hunting at our halts. A shot might be heard by some German outpost and serve to ruin all our plans."

All that night we marched northward. At dawn we

halted in a small valley between hills, where the dry, sandy bed of a tributary of the Great Fish River gave water a foot below the surface. We were now six days out from Aus with two hundred and eighty miles to our credit. The sensation of hunger had passed, but we were weakening. There was sufficient grass to feed the horses, but they looked as though another march or two would be their finish.

We marched again the next night. Toward morning the air began to smell of dust, like a room which has been dusted and left for some time without airing. At dawn Piet Uys and I lay on a ridge among the stunted thorn scrub and descried the Germans, the dust of whose passage we had scented in the night. They were camped on the further side of a wide flat, about three miles away, under the toe of a ridge some miles long, which lay across their line of march. To the left of the ridge the silver shimmer of the railway track led to the little white-walled town of Gibeon.

All day we watched the enemy. They made no move till afternoon. Then a long string of wagons left their camp in the direction of Gibeon. Through our glasses we could see an engine shunting cars onto the siding where gangs of men began to load the contents of the wagons into railway cars.

"I wonder whether the General would try a raid on those cars after dark?" I queried. The thought of all that food made my empty stomach squirm.

"Look on the end of the ridge nearest the station," growled Piet. "There are guns being placed. All along the ridge I can see men building *schanzes* of stone. The Germans have found out that we are following them and are going to fight—they think we are weak enough to

make an easy killing. First they move their sausages and beer to the railway, so that if we beat them those sausages and beer will not fill our bellies. They are baiting a trap. Those guns would blow us to hell if we tried a raid."

"You have forgotten your religion lately, Piet."

"When my belly is full it will return."

We descended the slope to our horses, returning to report.

"Give me a push up, Piet," I begged. My knees were weak. After he had pushed me into the saddle I had to ride round to the off side of his horse and pull him up into his. His knees were weak, too.

"If tomorrow we do not fight we shall never fight again," he muttered. We were getting lightheaded too, and drove ourselves and our horses by sheer will power and the habit of discipline. We had traveled more than three hundred miles now, in seven days, on one day's rations.

After dark that night Colonel Royston, with the Natal Light Horse brigade, moved out of camp with the Hottentot as guide. Royston's instructions were to move wide of the enemy's left flank, swing round behind him, and take up a position on a ridge which covered the road by which the Germans must retreat.

Our twenty-odd scouts rode in the opposite direction. Our mission was to march round the town of Gibeon, find a suitable bridge or culvert on the railway beyond the station, and blow it up, to prevent the enemy from moving his supplies by rail. This done, we were to return and attach ourselves to the Carbineers' brigade for tomorrow's action.

The Carbineers' and Imperial Light Horse brigades

were to make a frontal attack at daybreak. Royston's force was to close in on the enemy's rear when their attention was sufficiently engaged in front.

It was good tactics, I thought, as our horses plodded slowly through the darkness, the only sound of our passage being the click of a horseshoe against a rock, the creak of leather, the jingle of a bit, or the tearing of cloth as a vicious *vacht-en-beetje* thornbush bit into some rider's leg, raising a stifled curse from the owner. Good tactics—if we were strong enough to carry it through. Had horses and men been fresh we could have swept round that German position, sat down and starved them out, without the loss of a man. But we could not wait. One day more without food was about our limit. We must abandon the mobile Boer tactics which had up to now stultified the efforts of the German staff. We must adopt the "batter and storm" tactics of the British, at which our enemy was probably quite as good if not better than ourselves. The German took a lot of moving when he got down behind a rock with his machine gun—we had found that out at Garub. But at Garub we could cut and run when the affair got too hot. This must of necessity be a fight to the finish.

We struck the railway beyond Gibeon and followed the glimmer of starlight on rails northward till we found a culvert. We set our charge. There was a lurid flash, a report like the thud of a giant hammer against wood. One side of the culvert drooped wearily. That job was done.

At that moment hell seemed to break loose along the ridge behind us, which was the German position. Very lights flared skyward, sinking slowly to earth, like meteors caught in some invisible net and lowered gently. Machine guns began to stammer, rifle fire to crackle.

"God Almighty," chuckled Fox. "That firework of ours started something. The Germans must be jumpy. I hope to God they all shoot one another."

But I was worried as I listened. Those rifleshots were from South African rifles unless I missed my guess. Could it be that Mackenzie had changed his plans and ordered a night attack?

When we rejoined the Carbineers an hour before dawn we found them as puzzled as the rest of us. We finally decided that the noise of our explosion had alarmed a jumpy sentry who had given the alarm, and that the Germans had been wasting ammunition on an imaginary enemy. None of us guessed the awful truth: that Colonel Royston had lost his way in the darkness—by either the treachery or carelessness of his Hottentot guide—blundered into the German camp, and had most of his force killed, wounded, or taken prisoner. It would have taken all the heart out of us if we had known that the force had ceased to exist which was supposed to fall on the enemy's rear as soon as we had him deeply committed to a frontal engagement.

As the first gray light came we moved forward at a walk, the scouts on the extreme left of the line of fifteen hundred horsemen which was going to attack a numerically stronger enemy in a prepared position.

My horse was very weak. For several days now there had been no spring in his walk, but he managed to plod on. There was no spring in me either.

As soon as the light strengthened the enemy guns began to search our line. We moved forward now at as near a gallop as our feeble horses could accomplish.

At about eight hundred yards' range the German machine guns began to tap their stuttering code, of

which the dots and dashes were nickel and lead. We dismounted. Our Number Threes led off the horses.

We worked our way forward on our bellies to within five hundred yards of the German position. There we stuck, and built little stone forts to hide our heads. The stones were round and none were larger than my fist. As fast as we could pile them up a foot high they rolled off one another. Meantime the machine-gun bullets sighed past or, hitting the stony ground in front, ricocheted with the shriek of banshees.

The German guns were silent now. We were beneath their angle of fire. But the machine guns kept up their steady tapping. Now half-a-dozen taps, cut off short, now a long-drawn-out drumming, till the nerves got tense and one held one's breath, waiting for the stop that never came, as the gunner found a good target and loosed a whole beltful of ammunition at it.

We fired steadily. Now at a point below the puff of steam which disclosed the position of an overheated machine gun. Now at a distant head, silhouetted against the skyline, as some German rifleman incautiously exposed himself.

We had carried out our part of the plan of attack. We had the enemy heavily engaged and were waiting for Colonel Royston's force to fall on them from behind. Then the German fire must necessarily slacken as they moved men to their rear to face Royston. At the first slackening we would be on our feet, scrambling up the steep slope ahead to get among them with the bayonet and end the long agony which had begun at Aus.

I did not think of food as I lay there, firing when I saw a mark. There were moments when I felt tense and strong, fit to carry on forever. But it was mostly weariness I felt. I longed to get this day's work over so that I

could sleep. Since Aus I had slept only in snatches, or taken an occasional doze in the saddle at the risk of a broken neck. Guards, cossack posts, and the care of horses had consumed most of the time during our short halts and left little leisure for sleep.

Again the order came down the Carbineers' line to my right, as at Garub, passed from man to man.

The Carbineers' brigade was to retire.

As we clambered to our saddles at the foot of the hill the German guns began again. A shell burst near us and we heard the baleful zzzzzzzzzu of shrapnel. A column of dust rose near us and shell splinters buzzed over our heads. We were out of range of the German machine guns now but they were hammering their heads off at the Imperial Light Horse, who had remained in position.

General Mackenzie galloped up to us. God! The man was laughing! He was sitting the wreck of that splendid chestnut charger as though he had just taken the salute on the parade ground and was pleased with the troops which had marched past him.

"Something's gone wrong with Royston," I heard him say to Colonel Mackay, who was commanding the Carbineers' brigade. "I am afraid we have got to count him out. I want the Carbineers to work out toward the railway line and get on the enemy's left flank. Try to engage the enemy close enough to give the Imperial Light Horse a chance to get in with the bayonet."

The horses seemed to have plucked up strength from somewhere as we galloped into a maze of small hills and thorn-grown gullies. My weakness had disappeared, too. The zest of battle and the smile of a very gallant sportsman had tuned up our nerves beyond their normal pitch.

After we entered the gullies we perforce split into small groups, each working independently in the gen-

eral direction of the position we should have to take up. Behind us the noise of battle seemed to be waxing higher. The Imperial Light Horse were catching it hot.

We ran into Cope in a little thorn flat where two gullies met. His lot looked as though they had been roughly handled. Several of them were wounded and he had a lot of missing, he told me, an empty pipe between his teeth, speaking as quietly as he had that day in Capetown when he had talked of treachery.

The scouts had not got off scot-free either. A low-hanging telephone wire had taken four under the chin and lifted them from the saddles of their galloping horses as we went into action that dawn. That was the last we had seen of them. Piet had a shell-splinter graze on one cheek and Fox looked shaken.

"Where's Pexton?" I asked, suddenly missing him.

"Back there, took a bullet between the eyes," blubbered Fox.

"Alamagtag," groaned Piet. "Pexton was a good man."

Cope's lot had caught a stray ammunition mule, one of the Imperial Light Horse mules which must have stampeded when the shell fire caught them in the day-break. We filled our bandoliers hurriedly while we talked, for they were almost empty, and rode on.

As we swung away from the battle we kept turning to our right as consistently as the maze of gullies through which we traveled would allow us. In the rough country we had lost contact with the Carbineers. What would, on the parade ground, have been the pivoting of a long line against the enemy's flank became a movement of individual groups to that position. Still, the result would be the same, provided we all kept our sense of direction.

We soon debouched into a wider gully which allowed

us to gallop along its bed. As it took the general direction we desired we followed it. When we judged ourselves to be far enough we climbed the low ridge which bordered it on the German side.

The moment my head topped the ridge I could see we had come too far. We had not only outflanked the Germans but had swung around them until we were on their right rear, about six hundred yards behind their position. We could see the German gunners serving their guns. Their machine gunners were squatting behind their machine guns, firing through the loopholes in the schansas they had built the day before. Riflemen lay all along the ridge, their feet toward us, firing steadily. Our own artillery was being active. Shells were bursting freely among the Germans. Just as we got into position one of our guns scored a direct hit on one of their cannon. It sagged sideways while the forms of most of the gunners lay beside it in the smoke of the bursting shell. We saw another shell burst among some German wagons which were clustered at the foot of their ridge, between them and us.

Then a sudden burst of rifle fire started on our right, where we should have been if we had not lost our way. The Carbineers' brigade had evidently completed its turning movement and was engaging the enemy, who made frantic disposition to meet this new menace, moving several machine guns across to face the Carbineers.

The Germans were now facing an enemy on both their front and right flank. On both they were heavily engaged. When we began to fire into their rear from fairly short range we caused consternation among them for a few minutes. I believe that if we had had two hundred men in our position instead of less than a score we could have finished the battle then and there.

But we were too few, although we fired so rapidly that our rifle barrels burned our hands and the oil from the stock bubbled and frizzled like frying bacon. We had it all our own way for some minutes, concentrating on the German right, which was nearest to us.

Fox was calling his shots, chuckling to himself when he thought he had downed his man. Piet was firing as steadily as though on the rifle range—he would not miss many at that distance. We shot the gun crew from the nearest gun and silenced at least two machine guns before Nemesis caught us. The Germans spotted us. Several machine guns opened on us and we lay flat while the bullets passed over us with the noise of a rising breeze. To make matters still more lively, our own guns opened on us—some observer on a high point had reported movement on our ridge, where we were not supposed to be. Three bursts of shrapnel about our ears startled us considerably. Fortunately we had good cover among the boulders and little damage was done.

"They should move us to another ridge," came Piet's voice in my ear. "When the big guns find our position it is time to go. We can fight just as well from the next ridge and there we can stay alive. Our own shrapnel kills just as dead as the enemy's."

He was right, I felt.

Then Fox did a very gallant thing. He stood upright and semaphored with his arms in the general direction of our guns, giving the conventional sign for "friends." The shells stopped, although the machine-gun bullets from the Germans were still coming pretty thick.

About this time we noticed the German left slackening fire. God! Their guns were limbering up. Machine-gun crews were packing up and loading their guns on mules. Riflemen began to stream down the slope toward

us to where their horses were tethered at the foot. The wagon park began to break up and mule teams to drag the wagons along the road toward us at the gallop. A long line of bayonets, topped by the slouch hats of the Imperial Light Horse, appeared on the ridge.

We fired as fast as we could. The road wound round the foot of our ridge, not two hundred yards away. We shot the mule team out of a gun, which lay abandoned in the road. We peppered the drivers of the enemy wagons till they jumped from their seats and took what cover they could along the roadside. Our adversaries had ceased firing at us now—they were too busy trying to get away. We sat on rocks in full view, firing as though at driven game. We were getting our own back, indeed, for what we had suffered.

The German troops began to pass us in retreat, cantering steadily in orderly columns of four. We had smoked them out of their position, beaten them, taken all their guns and their supplies. The plain was dotted with abandoned wagons and field guns which were being dragged here and there by their terrified teams. The wrecked culvert would prevent the trainload of supplies from escaping. But the Germans were still a military force, capable of giving punishment. We could not but admire their discipline as they ran the gauntlet of our fire without breaking ranks.

Furiously we fired. Few shots could miss with such a target, but there were too few of us to stop them, although we dropped them fairly fast. When they had passed us, we mounted and joined the galloping throng of Carbineers and Imperial Light Horse which were pressing the German rearguard at a gallop.

The rest of that day is a confused memory. We pressed the German retreat until it became a rout. Small

parties of Germans began to break away from their column, hunting some place to hide from the unslackening pursuit by wild, tattered, bearded horsemen, who maintained a steady fire from the saddle. Small parties of us broke away also to follow them. We rode them down in the open. We fought little groups of them in sandy gullies among the thornbushes, where no quarter was asked or given on either side.

When night fell I found myself at least twenty miles from the scene of the attack on the German position. With me were Piet Uys and Fox, with a stray trooper of Carbineers. Our saddles were hung with food-filled German haversacks. We dug in a sandy stream bed until we found water. We made a fire of dry thorn branches and smelled once more the unutterable fragrance of coffee. We ate tinned pork, sausages, bread, and beans till we were ready to burst. Then we slept.

The German Southwest African campaign was virtually over. After the Gibeon fight the southern German force ceased to exist as a military entity. There still remained months of campaigning, moving slowly northward till we occupied Windhoek, the capital, while General Botha cornered the northern Germans in the wilds of Ovamboland, by a series of brilliant maneuvers, and forced their surrender. But Gibeon ended our participation in the fighting.

Part III

GOLD THIEVES IN MOZAMBIQUE AND TIN MINING IN NIGERIA

The 'eathen in 'is blindness bows down to wood and stone,
'E don't obey no orders unless they is 'is own.

Kipling.

GOLD THIEVES

AFTER the German Southwest African campaign the expeditionary force was disbanded—we had signed on for the duration of that campaign only. By the time we got out of uniform we were fed up with the war. We had had a rough trip on the troopship from Luderitzbucht, clear around the Cape to Durban, ten days of it in the hold of a rusty old tramp with short rations to boot. On top of that they kept us in camp in Pietermaritzburg for a week until some notable could find time from his everyday affairs to make us a valedictory address and express the appreciation of the nation for our services. When the day of the address did come, it was pouring with rain. We stood for hours in the park, at attention, water running from our sodden uniforms, while several smug-looking gentlemen in top hats made long speeches from the shelter of an awning.

When the ordeal was over they handed us our discharges. As soon as I got mine I turned in my rifle at the armory, bought a civilian outfit, drank a quick succession of whiskeys at the Horseshoe Hotel, and caught the first train for Beacon Hill.

I had a glorious month there with Winnie. Then I put my name down for the South African contingent, which was being recruited for the Western Front. There was at the same time another South African force being recruited for service in German East Africa, but I had deliberately chosen France to fight in. In France at least one didn't have to chase the enemy halfway across a continent to fight him.

When I got to Pietermaritzburg to join up I found that most of the German West veterans had volunteered for one or other of the new contingents. I had been by no means the first to get over my grouch at the anticlimax to our Southwest African campaign.

However, I hadn't even got into uniform when I was notified that I had been transferred from the army to the Essential Industries Board and was to hold myself at the latter's disposal. Mining engineers were being withdrawn from the army to speed up the production of metals; the big battles on the Western Front were opening the eyes of the authorities to the huge quantities of lead, nickel, tin—and gold required to fight a war in which millions of men were engaged.

A few days later I received an official envelope with my instructions. The Essential Industries people evidently had my dossier, because they ordered me at once to Mozambique to speed up production on the Revue dredge, which I had helped to build years before. I left the next day.

In Mozambique I found that gold production on the dredge had dropped to a small fraction of what it had used to be. The old crew whom I had known had gone, scattered to half-a-dozen fighting fronts. Their places had been taken by as evil a set of blackguards as I have ever come across.

If the present crew of ruffians had been men of the type of Nobby Clarke or "Long Jim" Robertson, it would not have been so bad. Nobby and Jim had been roistering ne'er-do-wells but they had had some saving graces. The new gang was pure poison.

The leader of them was a German-American by the name of Shultz. He was tall and so thin as to give the impression that he was in the throes of chronic malaria,

an idea to which his yellowish complexion gave some support. As a matter of fact he was strong and wiry and had never had malaria in his life, having recently come from Europe, from Germany I suspected. Shultz had small, beady eyes like a lizard, a mouth like a rattrap, and a voice like Uriah Heep. I had been brought in ostensibly by the French owners as superintendent of the property, in the hope that this would lull any suspicions that I was on a special mission. But Shultz wasn't fooled, I was sure. I had an idea that he knew I was after him and that he had no fear of the result.

There were ten white men in the dredge camp, counting Shultz and myself. Shultz ran one shift, a Greek from Beira ran another. The third was run by no less than "Parson" Jones of construction days, who had been run out of camp by Nobby and Jim with the connivance of a native prostitute. The six oilers were local Portuguese whom I judged too stupid and insignificant to be mixed up in the roguery that I believed was going on, other than as accomplices, although I had no doubt they would follow the lead of Shultz and the other two shift bosses, or winchmen.

Since I felt sure that the sudden drop in gold production could have come only from gold stealing, my first step must be to get some proof. One of my first investigations must be as to how the stolen gold was being disposed of.

Now Mozambique boasts of an excellent mining law, modeled on the Rhodesian. Under this law it is a criminal offense to be in possession of raw gold, unless you can produce evidence that the gold was legitimately acquired. In other words the possessor of raw gold is presumed guilty of gold stealing and the burden of proof of innocence is his. Furthermore, under this mining

code, all owners of mines must report to the mines office their monthly production of gold. This production is then published in the monthly mining gazette.

The last half-dozen copies of this gazette made most illuminating reading. Six months previous the list of local mines read about as follows:

Gold Production from Macequece District

Andrada Mines Ltd. (Revue Dredge)	5,000 oz.
Braganza Mine	500 "
Forecastle Mine	280 "
Winnifred Mine	310 "
Etmundian Mine	50 "

The next month the dredge production dropped suddenly to about two thousand ounces, while that of the Winnifred Mine jumped to over three thousand. So it went on thereafter, month by month, the dredge producing less than half of its usual production while each of the little surrounding independent properties in turn jumped high enough to indicate what was being stolen from the dredge. Evidently that was how it was being done. The gold thieves could not sell their stolen gold openly so they had an arrangement with the small local mine owners to include it in their production and thus make honest metal of it.

It seemed reasonable to assume that the gold would be stolen from the dredge at night when no one but the crew would be about. I did not want to give the appearance of having suspicions and was therefore careful ostensibly to stay away from the dredge after dark. However, one night I took a trail to the river through the bush to a place just clear of the great electric lights of the dredge. There I took my stand behind a thick patch

of bushes on the river bank and settled down to fight off sleep and mosquitoes for a long vigil.

The dredge was working steadily; the long line of loaded buckets, breaking the surface of the steely-looking yellow water, appeared like some huge river serpent climbing aboard. Sparks flew from the rock pile at the stern where the monster dredge spewed a continuous stream of rocks and gravel to drop fifty feet onto the pile. Backward and forward swung the steel monster, growling, groaning, and roaring with the rocky material it was gorging and digesting in its belly, saving the specks of gold and discarding the rest.

Eleven o'clock came and with it the night or "graveyard" shift, as we called it. Three white men and half-a-dozen natives ferried their way across the stretch of muddy water to the dredge. In a few minutes the shift which they had relieved ferried their way ashore and I could see their lanterns dancing through the bush on their way home.

It was about one o'clock in the morning and I was heartily sick of my watch before the dredge stopped. However, as the noise of the machinery ceased, I woke from a doze instantly. The stoppage might be from any one of a score of legitimate causes: an oversized boulder in the bucket line, a cable fouled in a sheave, a heated bearing—or it might be from the cause for which I waited.

Presently I saw the light switch on in the wire-netting enclosure within the dredge where the gold-saving tables were situated. Then one of the smaller centrifugal pumps began to hum. They would need some water to wash the gravel clear of the amalgam of gold and mercury at the head of the tables, the place most convenient for getting the most gold in the shortest time. Then

there was the noise of men working on the tables. After half an hour or so the dredge began to work again. They were cleaning up the tables at night. That was certain. The thieving swine. To give me conclusive proof, the smell of mercury fumes was wafted toward me on the dank night air. Through a window I could see a man turning the handle of the small forge we kept aboard for minor blacksmith jobs, while another held a shovel over the flame. The men were Portuguese. That meant the oilers were in it, too. That shovel contained the amalgam they had just cleaned up. They were refining the mixture of gold and mercury by the simple process of evaporating the mercury from the gold.

I was sure of my ground now. The gold was being stolen. How to prevent it was another matter. There were ten men in the crew and all of them undoubtedly implicated except myself. Nine men were stealing between them something like three thousand ounces of gold per month. At four pounds the ounce, that meant twelve thousand pounds, well over a thousand pounds per month for each one of the rotten blackguards. I must move carefully. Most of the gang were capable of cheerfully slitting a throat for considerably less than a thousand pounds per month, unless my estimate of their character was wrong.

My next move was to see the police in Macequece. I had a disappointment here. My old friend Serpa had retired, gone back to Portugal. The new police commandant was a man named Silva who was of a different type from the jolly, hard-drinking, and somewhat venal Serpa. Silva was shifty, sullen, evidently anti-British, and looked as crooked as a dog's hind leg.

I told him what I had seen and asked for the arrest of the night shift.

"Good—most excellent Senhor—but you have no proof."

"Great God, Senhor Commandant. What more proof do you want? The production of the dredge has dropped to half of what it was. The production of the near-by mines has jumped to many times what it is possible for them to produce. On top of that I watched the dredge stop at night, saw the men working on the gold tables, smelled the fumes as they evaporated the mercury off the gold."

"On such evidence we cannot act. If you will produce the thief in possession of the gold and two independent witnesses of good character to swear that he stole it—then we will arrest him."

"But that's a police job."

"It is for me to say what is a job for the police."

"Look, Senhor Commandant. Once years ago when that dredge was being built we needed men. Your predecessor was kind enough to help us. He threatened to deport all unemployed whites in Macequece district and so forced the men in to work for us. Can you not help by deporting the leaders of those thieves as undesirables? I know the law gives you that prerogative."

"I will not do it. You must take my way. Witnesses can be found for a price. There is plenty of gold on the dredge. Take your two witnesses with you. Drop a little gold in the pockets of the man you want arrested—the job is done. There will be certain unofficial legal fees to be paid afterward, of course."

It was the "unofficial legal fees" which counted with him. They would go into his pocket. Short of "planting" the evidence as he suggested, there was no help to be got from the Portuguese authorities, I could see.

Then Shultz came up to my house to visit me one

night. He didn't like me much—he had already been at pains to show that—and wasn't likely to look me up for pleasure. He came to the point of his visit without any preliminaries.

"Some natives saw you sneaking round the dredge the other night," he remarked, with the sneering smile which always made me feel like murder.

"Well?"

"We wouldn't mind your going aboard. It was your lying out in the bush we didn't like."

"Shultz, if any of my dredge crew questions what I do, he'll be hunting for another job, quick."

"All right, you're the boss. But if you fire one of us the rest will leave too."

He had me there, although I tried not to show it. My job was to speed up production, not to get the dredge shut down for an indefinite time while I hunted a crew. Men were scarce. I had already canvassed the country for some honest men, but all the honest men seemed to be fighting.

"Look here, Rainier," he continued in a more ingratiating tone. "We don't want to fight you. We'd sooner have you with us than against us."

"What do you mean?"

"Come in on this—it will pay you." He took from his pocket a piece of smelted gold about the size of a large marble, tossed it carelessly in the air, caught it, and put it back.

His audacity surprised me into silence.

"This isn't a healthy climate for a man all on his own," he remarked as he got up to leave.

I had a taste of Shultz's methods a few days later, next "cleanup" day, when the dredge was stopped for a

shift while the gold was cleaned up from the gold-saving tables under the supervision of two Portuguese police.

While the cleanup was in progress I walked to the other end of the dredge to supervise a repair gang, leaving my coat hanging on a nail over the gold tables where the cleanup gang was working. Before I had gone far I remembered that I had left my pipe in the coat pocket. Returning to the coat and feeling about in the pockets, my hand felt a ball of amalgam which had evidently just been cleaned up from the tables. I swore fervently. If I hadn't happened to come back, what a mess I should have been in. The method which Silva had suggested I use on the thieves was being used on me.

I put the amalgam hurriedly back on the tables and found a near-by hiding place. In a minute or two Shultz appeared, accompanied by the two police. He went straight to my coat and placed his hand without hesitation in the pocket which I had just cleared of its incriminating evidence.

"You haven't lost anything in my pocket, have you, Shultz?" I remarked from behind him.

His yellow face suddenly flushed crimson. He walked away without a word. The police shrugged their shoulders and followed him.

During the next week I was racking my brains to find a solution when, unexpectedly, Nicholson solved my problem—the same Nick who had given me the job on the construction of that very dredge. Nick was now building a tin dredge in the Malay States and had traced me into the army, out again, and now back to Mozambique, cabling me to come over to him and bring a dredge crew with me. I cabled him my position. "Ship me the winchmen," was his reply. He was evidently desperately in need of men, honest or otherwise.

Then I had a showdown with Shultz.

"Look here, Shultz," I told him. "I'll get you fellows sooner or later—if I don't, someone else will. I'm willing to ship you, the Greek, and the 'Parson' over to Nicholson. It's a way out for you and the pay is good."

To my surprise he accepted with alacrity. I had evidently frightened him almost as much as he had frightened me.

Once they were gone I had no difficulty in filling their places with a Portugee and two deserters from an American tramp steamer, whom the British Consul in Beira shipped on to me. They were all green men and needed training, but at least the dredge, even under their inexpert treatment, was producing more gold than it had recently and none of it was being stolen.

Before many months had passed I slipped down to South Africa, married Winnie, and brought her back. We settled down happily to married life. I had been afraid she would be lonely, as I was busy on the dredge all day long. But Winnie, Boer on her mother's side, had pioneer blood of many generations in her veins. She took to the life, beginning a collection of the endless variety of beautiful wild flowers in Mozambique, painting them in a sketchbook in water colors. In the evening she would play the piano and sing the old songs I hadn't had a chance to hear since I was a boy in Natal. Shultz had given me the piano as a parting gift. He had quite a talent for music. As I listened to Winnie's playing my mind would often wander back to the rough times I had had in Mozambique in the earlier years.

Then the war turned us topsy-turvy again. The Board cabled me to "proceed at once to Northern Nigeria to construct and operate two tin dredges on Ropp

Tin Mine, Bauchi plateau, near terminus Nigerian railway."

Winnie wanted to accompany me, but I wasn't taking any chances with my new-found happiness. I didn't know much about Nigeria, but it sounded rough and unhealthful to me.

Ware and beware of the Bight of Benin,
Where few come out though many go in.

The old tag came into my mind when I thought of the country. So she stayed behind with her people in Beacon Hill while I proceeded to Capetown to catch my boat.

A GERMAN COMMERCE RAIDER

FEELING sick at heart from parting with Winnie, I leaned over the *Dunvegan Castle's* rail in the darkness. Peevishly I wondered why we didn't get under way instead of anchoring in the middle of Table Bay after leaving the dock in Capetown.

Then I heard the low hum of a motorboat approaching. A figure in a gray mackintosh stepped onto the gangplank. It was General Smuts.

I had seen him once before, in German Southwest Africa, at Tchaukaib, when he came to pay a visit to our force after he and Botha had squashed the Boer rebellion between them. There was no mistaking the wide-set eyes, broad forehead, pointed gray beard, and slight, upright figure.

He had been busy since the end of the German Southwest African campaign, I knew, having immediately afterward taken command of the South African forces in German East Africa. With the familiar series of lightning moves and forced marches he had outmaneuvered the German, Von Lettow Vorbeck, and taken the bulk of the country in six months, leaving the mopping up to subordinates. The fact that the mopping up was still in progress and would be uncompleted at the signing of the armistice more than two years later wasn't General Smuts's fault.

It was recent news that he had been nominated as a member of the supreme war council of the Allies. That was a far cry for a Boer general, who had been fighting

against the British only fifteen years before. But Janie Smuts deserved it.

As soon as General Smuts was aboard the anchor came up and the *Dunvegan Castle* steamed out into the Atlantic.

The ship was full. In addition to the ordinary run of passengers there were a hundred young South African recruits for the British air force. There was something in the South African makeup, it seemed, which had proved specially adaptable to the new science of air fighting. The authorities were drumming up recruits in South Africa and shipping them across by hundreds. There was also a sprinkling of elderly men, stamped in the pattern of retired soldiers, who were going home to offer their services, although most of them seemed to be well over the age limit.

Also, there were very few women aboard. One of them was a fifth-rate music-hall artiste by the name of Daisy. The young air-force recruits were paying her a lot of attention, and I hoped their pockets would not be much the lighter by the time they landed.

One night I was leaning over the rail of the boat deck when General Smuts joined me, leaning his elbows on the rail beside me.

"Where have I seen you before?" he asked.

"German West, at Tchaukaib." I had heard of his wonderful memory for faces.

"Yes, yes. You rode next to a Boer whom I knew, Piet Uys."

"You have a good memory, General."

He laughed. "That is nothing—a trick of politicians. What are you going to do in England?"

I told him.

"How goes the war?" I asked him. It was a chance in a lifetime to get an opinion from a man who knew the truth, if anyone did.

He shook his head doubtfully. "We cannot lose if we conserve our man power," he asserted. "Germany must starve sooner or later if we have enough men to keep her ringed in her big laager. But these great battles—they kill men—when we should be saving them."

Nothing more of interest happened to me until we were about ten days out of Capetown, crossing the line. It was some time after dinner. Through the open port-hole of my cabin, from about a mile away, came a flash, then a significant whine which passed overhead.

There was confusion in the alleyway as I stepped into it. Stewards were running fast in various directions. A group of air-force recruits were standing in the doorway of the dining saloon, arguing as to whether it had really been a shell they heard or not. They were hoping it had been, I believe.

Suddenly the door of a cabin shot open and a distracted Daisy catapulted herself among them. All she wore was a flimsy silk garment which barely reached down to her waist. It looked like a silk nightgown, which she had slipped over her head and forgotten to pull down.

"Caw blime, blokes," she shrieked, precipitating herself onto the bosom of a recruit and throwing her arms around his neck. "Sive me—don't let them German officers get me."

There was an explosion of laughter from the group. "Put your pants on."

"You forgot your fig leaf, Daisy," they chorused.

With a despairing wail, which sounded almost genuine, Daisy fled. The last we saw of her was the twinkling

of her plump legs as she sped down an alleyway, still shrieking.

Then the lights went out, all but a dim glow here and there in the alleyways.

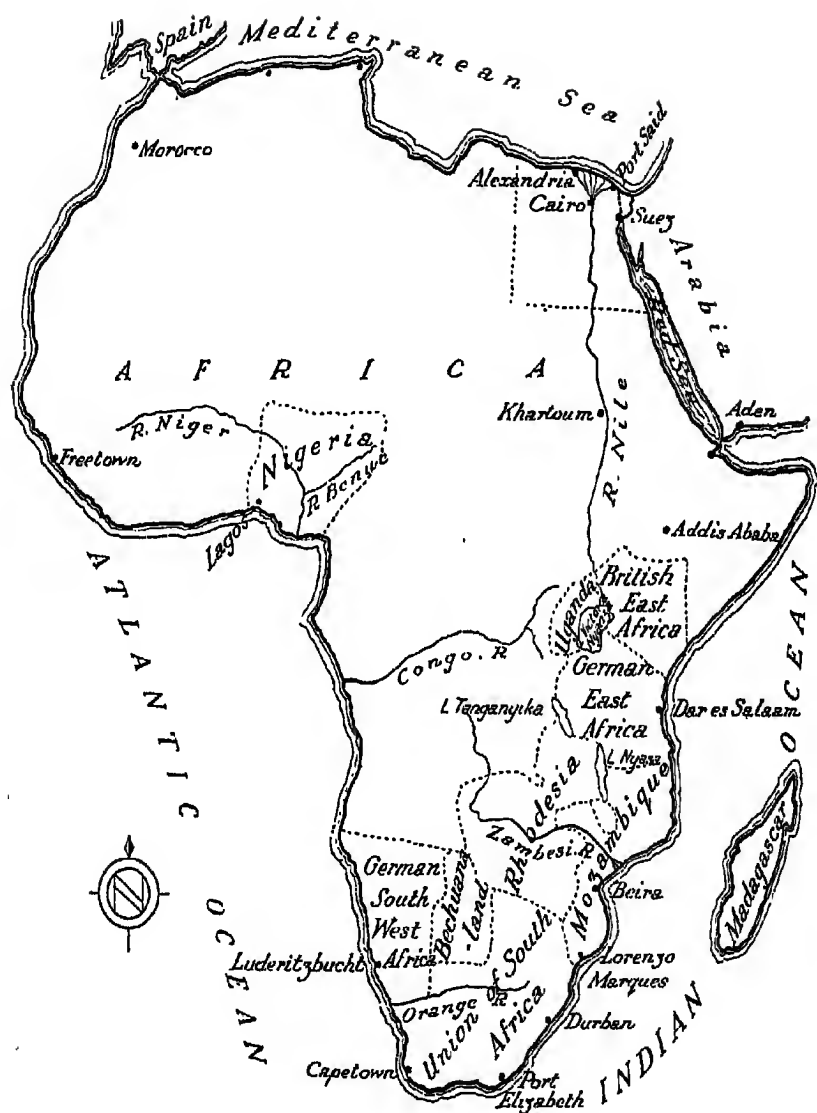
I groped my way on deck. The engines were going at their fullest speed and the whole ship was vibrating. Another flash from far astern and the whine of another shell, well off to starboard. The ship heeled to another change of course.

We went at full speed all that night and had lost our pursuer by daybreak—the honest engines of the *Dunvegan Castle* pulled us through. The captain told me it was probably the German commerce raider *Wolf* which had fired on us, as she had been reported recently in these latitudes of the Atlantic.

This episode turned out to be a lucky break for me as the captain received instructions from the Admiralty to put into Freetown, Sierra Leone, to await an escort. Freetown was on my route, about a thousand miles up the coast from Lagos, in southern Nigeria. Landing in Sierra Leone would save me a month's traveling, to England and back. It would also save me passing twice through the submarine zone round the British Isles.

Unfortunately, not having foreseen this change of route, I had practically no money in hand when I landed in Sierra Leone. The Ropp Tin Company had cabled me the money I had asked for in Capetown, sufficient to get me to England, where I had intended to draw enough cash to finish my journey. Bridge and beers on the *Dunvegan Castle* had left me with only a pound or two in my pocket.

However, the Elder Dempster Steamship Company in Sierra Leone rose to the occasion, after some persuasion, by transporting me to Lagos on credit. In Lagos I



persuaded the Nigerian Railways management into carrying me the six days' journey to their terminus at Bukuru on the Bauchi plateau, on credit too.

But neither the Elder Dempster Company nor the railway would advance me money for my expenses. A bare ticket to my destination was all they would stand and I did not want to spend the time in Lagos waiting for cabled money to come through. That would have meant missing the "boat train," the only passenger train which ran from Lagos to railhead. The next one would leave when the next passenger steamer arrived from England, anything from two weeks to a month hence.

On the week-long coasting voyage from Sierra Leone to Lagos being without money was no serious matter, merely amounting to a forced abstention from drinks and other extras. However, on the six-day journey by train from Lagos to Bukuru I should have to tighten my belt considerably unless luck came my way, as there are no meals thrown in with railway tickets.

I managed all right the first day on the hospitality of a portly native potentate, draped in the gaudiest Manchester cotton goods imaginable, who happened to be traveling in my compartment. True, he seemed to live mostly on bananas, but they were good bananas and bananas are a filling fruit. He got out somewhere on the first night and I awoke to find myself alone in the compartment.

The second day I tightened my belt and tried not to notice the crowd streaming down the corridor to the dining car when the steward announced the meals.

It was dark when a diminutive cockney came into my compartment. His steward's uniform was well pressed and he was shaved as clean as a soldier on dress parade.

"Sy, Guv'nor, don't yer ever eat?" he queried.

"Not this trip."

"Why not?"

"Broke."

"Gorblime—'ow fur are you going?"

"Bukuru."

"Gorstrikemepink. Five dyes yet and we tyke the bleeding dining car orf ternight at Jebba, cos the blurry Yorubas 'cross the river steals the ryles at night and throws spears through the winders of the trynes if they gets interrupted. Yer belly'll be stuck to yer backbone long before yer gets ter Bukuru, myte. Come along o' me, myte. I ain't 'ead stooard o' this blasted tryne fer nuthing. I'll fix yer a bite ter tyke along."

I followed him to the dining car, where the stewards were just clearing away the dinner.

"'Ere Jacko," he cried to one of them, a hefty savage in white ducks. "Fix this bloke up with a bellyful o' grub."

After I was full to the brim with a dinner which had run to a bottle of beer to wash it down, this Samaritan in steward's guise handed me a heavy sack.

"'Ere's a bite o' tinned meat and some bread ter see yer through," he remarked.

"Give me a bill and I'll send you the money from Bukuru."

"It's on ther ryleway, don't worry," he winked.

I tried to thank him.

"Garn, yer'd do the syme for me," he cried, giving me a push along the corridor.

"'Ere, wyte a mo'," he cried as I left. "Yer'll need a bit o' change along the road." He pressed a five-pound note upon me. "Yer can send me the cash from the other end," he added.

It was duly sent.

CANNIBAL NEIGHBORS

A MINE has been defined as a hole in the ground down which people pour money—a true enough definition of a good many mines I have known. The Ropp Tin Mine was not a bit like this, although a good deal of money was to be poured into it before the big dividends began to be paid. Furthermore, there was no hole in the ground on Ropp. It consisted of a mining concession on the rolling, grassy plain of the Bauchi plateau and was some twenty miles long by ten miles wide. This area was traversed by several small mountain streams, in the gravel of whose beds cassiterite, the tin mineral, lay mixed with sand and pebbles.

On the two largest of these streams I was to build the two great dredges, not unlike the one I had recently left on the Revue River in Mozambique. The other streams were to be worked by different methods. Four separate camps administered the development of this great property, which was soon to employ many thousands of native laborers and rank among the largest tin producers of the world, situated though it was in the heart of cannibal Pagan country, which had first been penetrated by whites only four or five years before.

I had hardly moved into the comfortable brick house which was to be my headquarters, overlooking a vista of rolling bushveld, when my new Hausa houseboy announced:

“Tarpenter lib for outside, sah.”

“Who is outside?”

"The tarpenter, sah. Him name Malachi. Chief man of all working mans."

I walked outside. In the dusty path before my door stood a stately figure in flowing white robes. His actual height of six feet was exaggerated to nearer seven by the towering folds of a snowy turban. A great black beard hid the lower half of his handsome black face. His nose was beaked to a predatory curve which was belied by the hint of a twinkle in a pair of black eyes. As I approached him he crumpled gracefully to a stooping position and touched his forehead to the ground three times.

"*Sanu, Zaike*," he boomed in a great voice, a pleased grin showing betel-stained teeth through his black beard. Then, seeing that the Hausa salutation was unintelligible to me, he repeated in the queer pidgin English of the country, which was to be our means of communication for a long time, "Mornin', sah."

"Good morning, Malachi," I replied. The exchange of greetings in English startled me. It was the first time in my life I had had to use English as a means of communication with an African native. It made me realize for the first time how far I had wandered from home. Of the many native languages of the country not one could I speak. The tin mines were set on the high Bauchi plateau among many small tribes of cannibal Pagans. The labor we employed were Hausas from the low country which began a hundred miles away, men of Malachi's race, Moslems who prayed with their faces toward Mecca and lived, for the most part, in great cities walled with massive circles of mud. Among Pagan and Hausa alike wandered the conquerors of both, the nomad Fulani, with their huge herds of white cattle. They were a fierce-looking people, whose hawklike features proclaimed their Arab origin. Coastward, where the

Niger and its great tributary, the Benue, flowed through fertile alluvial plains, were dozens of Negro tribes, among whom flourished the cult of the Leopard and other secret societies almost as noxious. Perched on the volcano of these twenty million savages, something like a thousand whites were maintaining their position by sheer bluff, their only backing, other than the prestige of the white man, being a few thousand askaris drilled and led by white officers. Pagan kinglets, Hausa or Fulani emirs, Negro chieftains were alike governed by a handful of district commissioners, young men mostly, under the eye of the Governor who represented the British Government.

As I greeted Malachi, there came the plop-plop-plop of a motor bicycle and Best pulled up beside us, methodically placing his machine upon its stand before he addressed us. Best was the engineer of the property, and a good one too, I was to find. He was short, slight, and perky as a sparrow. His khaki shirt and shorts always looked as though they had just been pressed. Even in the wet season mud seemed to refrain from splashing on him, just as water refuses to stick to a duck's back.

"Hullo, South Africa," he hailed me cheerily. "Dropped in to see if you are comfortable. We can walk around the job too, if you like."

"God, what a mess," I ejaculated as I saw huge gear wheels, piles of great steel plates, and all the thousand and one parts which make up a dredge lying where they had been pitched from the lorries on ground which the beginnings of the wet season had already begun to turn swampy.

"This ground fooled us," explained Best. "Seemed solid enough when we unloaded the stuff here. But a ditch or two should drain it."

The first job was to get the material sorted into some kind of order. Malachi caused a gang of Hausa laborers to materialize who were soon dragging and prying under his direction.

"Two man watch every night so Pagan no stealum iron," he informed me. "Pagan stealum iron for make hoe—make spear too."

A week or two later he came to me with a very grave face.

"Watchmans gone, sah."

"Put two more on, then."

"No man fit to watch."

"No one wants to watch! Why?"

"'Fraid Pagan."

"Why are they afraid of the Pagans?"

"'Cause Pagan done chop two watchmans last night."

"What, the Pagans ate the two watchmen last night!"

"Yes, sah."

"How do you know the watchmen haven't run away?"

"Find bones, sah."

He unwrapped a bundle he was carrying and rolled out a couple of well-gnawed human skulls, which gave off a smell of roast beef in proof that they had been recently cooked. He explained that he had found the watchmen missing when the gang started work that morning. There had been signs of a struggle among the machinery and a good deal of blood. Alone, he had followed the spoor of a number of men about a mile down the river and found the place where they had cooked the bodies and done the ritualistic head dance around the heads of their victims.

"That was a plucky thing to do, Malachi. The Pagans might have caught you."

"Malachi not fear Pagan in daytime, by Allah." He

hitched round his belt and I saw that he was carrying a long, heavy sword attached to it.

I jumped in the car and hastened to consult Best at the main camp.

"The bastards have got to be taught a lesson. They're a queer people," he told me. "So wild that they die in jail in a couple of weeks. Just can't stand confinement. There's a big village of them up in that rocky hill back of your house—expect they are the culprits. I tried to go up there one day to see what it was like—no one knows much about the Pagans as yet. I followed a little twisty path between the big granite boulders till I was halfway up the hill. Then I was confronted by a big naked savage with a wicked-looking spear. He pointed the spear back down the path. I followed his directions—quick. They come down to hunt in the plain at times. They have their little patches of cultivation on the plain too. But they live up in the rocky hills and don't encourage visitors."

Best and I decided to drive the sixty miles to Naraguta to see the district commissioner. We might persuade him to send down a punitive force.

A smart-looking askari presented arms at the gate of the commissioner's big compound in the little thatched settlement of Naraguta. Captain Molyneux, the district commissioner, was sitting down to a whiskey and soda when we joined him in the veranda.

"I've seen you somewhere—in South Africa, I think," remarked the captain after Best had introduced me.

It was a piece of pure luck. Not only was Captain Molyneux a South African, but he had served in the Zulu rebellion with another squadron of Carbineers. He looked more British than South African with his well-manicured fingers and his slight, graceful figure, but he

had the alert look which men acquire when they have wandered long among primitive peoples.

"I'll send some askaris down and smoke the Pagans out for you," he agreed after we had told our story. "Can't let them get away with a barefaced piece of man eating. But it's a pity we have to take official notice of it. Our policy is to let the Pagans alone as much as possible, to give them a chance of absorbing civilization indirectly from their neighbors. Now I shall have to burn the offending village to make an example. That means the extermination of every man, woman, and child in it because, at this season, their grain has been harvested and stored in the little grain towers in the village. Without that they cannot carry on till the next harvest. Where every village regards the neighboring village as a potential stew in the pot, there's not much charity to be expected from the outside."

Molyneux paused and then continued:

"If only some of you mining men could persuade the Pagans to work, that would civilize them more quickly than any other scheme I know."

"They won't work," chirruped Best, sipping his drink daintily. "Most of the mines have already tried to recruit them—but Johnny Pagan can't see the idea. He's self-supporting with his fields and his hunting—and a bit of man killing thrown in once in a while to give variety to his diet. His tailor's bill is zero. Some day I suppose he'll get the urge for clothes and other luxuries which need money to acquire—then he'll have to work to get them. The Pagans would be cheaper labor than the Hausas, who have to be transported hundreds of miles to get here."

"Why don't you let me settle it unofficially?" I asked Molyneux. "Lend me a few askaris. I'll give the Pagans

a good fright, without burning their grain stores. Maybe I can frighten them enough so they'll go to work."

After some hesitation Molyneux agreed.

Some days later two dozen very soldierly-looking askaris paraded before my door under the command of a sergeant. They were smart-looking troops in their khaki shorts and tunies with the brightly polished brass buttons.

Sending a couple of "pointers" fifty yards ahead of us, I led my punitive expedition with bayonets fixed up the hill by the merest vestiges of a path which deliberately zigzagged up the slope, turned back on itself, and displayed all the symptoms of having been designed especially to provide every chance of ambushing an ascending foe.

Malachi had appointed himself my personal body-guard. He strode behind me carrying his wicked sword unsheathed in his hand. Every now and then his martial ardor would become unbearably and he would make the sword whistle through the air with a couple of vicious slashes, which were closer to my neck than I liked.

After some half-hour's climb we came in sight of the village, without having seen a sign of a Pagan, although I knew they were wary enough to be well aware of our approach.

At about a hundred yards' range we halted, while I examined the collection of round mud hovels before us, whose gray thatched roofs were almost indistinguishable from the gray granite boulders among which they were scattered without the least attempt at order. In the center of the village were several conical mud towers, built on stilts ten feet high, evidently the grain storehouses of which Molyneux had spoken. I didn't like the complete

silence and air of desertion about the village. We had an overwhelming force if the Pagans would meet us in the open, but they could make things hot for us if they ever got to close quarters. There were too many boulders and bushes scattered about for my liking—too much cover for a rush.

Nervously I played with the bolt of my rifle. The askaris kept shifting from one foot to the other. One of them picked up a small stone and began to sharpen his bayonet. Malachi kept glancing in my direction as though for permission to advance. I was just about to give the order to extend formation and rush the village when there came a shout from the sergeant on my left.

“Look, sah, look. Pagan run like hell.”

A crowd of Pagan warriors was scampering up the rocky slope beyond the village like a troop of baboons caught raiding a field. Evidently they had sent their women to the high peaks for safety while they waited to bushwhack us in the village. Our long pause had been too much for their nerves. They probably thought we had been making magic of some sort.

Without waiting for an order my askaris began to fire rapidly at the retreating Pagans, who clambered frantically upward as the noise of firing echoed back from the rocky slopes and ricocheting bullets whined savagely past them. In a few seconds they had disappeared over the skyline. As far as I could see none of the Pagans had been hit—the askaris were steady troops but rotten shots with a rifle, like all the African natives I ever came in contact with. I was well pleased. I wanted to teach the Pagans a lesson, to scare them thoroughly, but it was no part of my plan to slaughter them and start a blood feud.

The stale, pigsty smell of the village mingled with the

reek of cordite fumes from the firing as we walked among the huts. The place was deserted, there was not a blessed thing in the huts—not even a cooking pot. The grain stores were full, however. I had expected to see festoons of human skulls decorating the doorways, but these cannibals evidently practiced their rites on or near the spot where they killed their victims. At any rate the village looked much like that of any other of the more primitive tribes which I had known further south.

I left the askaris to occupy the village, telling them to defend themselves if attacked but to bring down to my house unharmed any of the Pagans who should want to surrender. I told them that Molyneux would have them shot if they did any damage to Pagan property.

For about a week there were no results. Malachi visited the village daily, but reported that no Pagans had been seen. Then one day he returned accompanied by two askaris who were guarding a very hungry-looking Pagan—he had the fierce, gaunt look of a hungry wolf. His ribs stood out above the hollow where his belly should have been like the shell of an empty steel framework.

"This Pagan say all Pagan very hungry," translated Malachi from the rapid quackquack of the Pagan's tongue. "Pagan king say want to come to talk to white Massa, but fear too much."

"Tell the king he can come to talk to me. No one will hurt him."

Several hours later the king arrived; his name was Waku, so Malachi informed me. He was a splendid-looking savage, nearer seven feet high than six, and well proportioned. He was naked except for a wrapping of white bark around the end of his genital. That one white spot on his great black body had the effect of gro-

tesquely accentuating his nudity. He stood erect before me with no hint of the suppliant in his attitude, but his eyes were rolling wildly and his chest was moving with short, nervous pants. He was nervous—and no wonder. *It was not only his own life that was at stake*; I held the very existence of his tribe in my hand by the possession of the grain without which they would starve.

In his hand he held a red and yellow lizard about a foot long and suddenly, with a stately gesture, he laid it at my feet. It was the tribute of the conquered to the conqueror—all he had to give. Lizards had evidently formed their diet in their exile. Not much else lived among the barren rocks where they had been hiding.

He made a long oration, in which the quacking sounds seemed to occur as frequently as do clicks in Zulu.

“Waku say he no want fight white Massa,” translated Malachi. “He give white Massa plenty *dash* if white Massa send soldicrs away. Give spear, give hoe—not fit give more because no more things lib for him.”

“Ask him why he steals my iron and eats my men.”

“Waku say his ppeople no got iron. Need iron. No want to kill watchman but they fight too much. When man fight well Pagan killum—chopum—when Pagan chop brave man he become brave too.”

“Tell him I want thirty of his young men to come and work for me. I will pay them the same as the other workers. He must keep thirty men always working for me. I will also make his tribe my watchmen to see that no more is stolen. If anything at all is stolen I shall kill one of his young men.”

“Waku say all right, sah.”

The thirty hostages came in due course and I moved the askaris down from the village to act as prison guard.

The Pagan recruits worked under the regular Hausa foremen during the day and were guarded by the askaris at night. They were willing enough. I reckoned they would make good laborers when they had learned the use of white men's tools and given up such practices as carrying wheelbarrows full of earth on their heads instead of wheeling them.

Entering them on the roll presented some difficulty because they had the habit of giving themselves one name today and another tomorrow. A man would call himself Buko on Monday, whereas at the Tuesday roll call he would say his name was Akapu and that he had never heard of anyone by the name which the foreman called. Probably this was connected with one of the many qucer cults of devil worship which they were known to practice but which no white man had as yet had a chance to study. We solved the difficulty by giving each a brass check with a number on it, fastening it round his waist with baling wire because he had no pockets.

Then came the weekly payday.

Our method of paying the several thousand workmen employed was to pass them in a long line through the pay office, entering by one door and leaving by another. A week's wage amounted to about four shillings. This was comparative wealth to a native because he could live on the fat of the land for two shillings a week and buy a Hausa virgin permanently for about five shillings—a divorced woman cost more because custom assessed her price at her original cost to her first husband plus all that he had invested in her upkeep since marrying her.

When the first Pagan was paid he gazed with a puzzled expression at the small pile of silver coins in his

hand. He smelled them. He bit one. He licked it, spat, and gazed at me with a pathetic look of inquiry.

Halting the line, I called one of the *doguerris*, fighting Yorubas from the Niger country whom I had brought in as camp policemen and clothed in scarlet coats with brass buttons to make a policeman's job popular.

"Take this Pagan to the market place and show him what money is for."

A wild ululation from the direction of the market place ten minutes later—and the Pagan leaped into the pay office, having outdistanced his guard. Clapped to his naked body was a protesting chicken, a large bundle of cow's entrails, a bleeding hunk of meat, a lump of rancid butter which was rapidly disintegrating and adding itself to the sweat drops on his black torso, yams, and a bunch of plantains. The Pagan had blown in his whole week's wages at once. He had never seen so much food at one time in his life. He danced around wildly, sweating with excitement, his white teeth flashing, exhibiting his wealth to his comrades, who now fought to get to the paying clerk, grabbed their pay eagerly, and disappeared in the direction of the market place.

I sent the askaris back to Molyneux and the Pagans home to exhibit their purchases before they could consume them.

The next day Waku was waiting outside the house at daybreak, with Malachi to interpret.

"Waku say you very good man but you make very much trouble for Pagan."

"Why, Malachi?"

"Because you give too much food. Now all Pagan mans want to come work for you. No mans lef' for defend village, for hunt, for plant fields."

Finally Waku and I struck a bargain, limiting the number of his tribe to be employed to the original thirty.

It was the first time that Pagans had worked on the mines. Their numbers gradually increased, as small tribe after small tribe profited by the force of example. Eventually they were to form the majority of the tens of thousands of men employed on the Bauchi tin field.

As I got to know the Pagans better I began to appreciate the sentiments of Molyneux when he had said that he liked them. True, their ideas as to cannibalism, community of marriage, and other customs did not correspond with ours, but on the whole they were a fine, understanding lot of savages with a sense of honor—according to their lights—and a great deal of pride.

"Why do you eat human flesh?" I asked Waku one day. "Do you like it better than beef?"

"Cow meat good," was the reply. "But man meat good, too. Man head plenty good, plenty strong. Pagan catch strong enemy, eat head, eat brains. Pagan catch strength, catch good brains too."

The Pagan's existence on the Bauchi plateau was a precarious one. I watched a Pagan cultivating his crops one day. He came galloping down the steep, rocky hillside from his village on a little wiry pony, which he rode without saddle or bridle, guiding it by a touch on its neck with his long spear haft. Before he reached the plain he stopped, gazing long at the rolling bushveld below him, like one of Fenimore Cooper's Indian scouts looking for the enemy. Once satisfied that the immediate neighborhood, at least, held no members of a neighboring tribe, he descended to the little tribal patch of cultivation, in the middle of which was a *juju* pole—an upright stick carrying a skull, erected by the tribal

witch doctor after suitable incantations to bring fertility to the field.

He slipped from the horse with a marvelous economy of movement. A moment before he and his horse had appeared one creature, now there were two. The human one stood poised, his nostrils distended as though sniffing the breeze, ready at the least alarm to spring back on his pony and race up the slope toward the village from which he had come. The horse too seemed as alert as his master, standing with ears pricked forward, pawing slightly with one forefoot.

Again satisfied, the Pagan attacked the ground furiously with his short-handled hoc—made of the iron he had laboriously scraped from the little seam of iron ore in the rocks near the village and patiently smelted with his clay forge and bellows of goatskin.

He dug with furious speed, restlessly alert, darting sidelong glances at the bush, like a hyena at a drinking hole when the lion's scent is on the breeze. Meanwhile the pony stood, unmoving, in spite of lack of halter, almost indistinguishable from the brownish scrub which formed its background.

When he had advanced a few hundred yards from his pony, digging, the Pagan straightened his back, glanced carefully round once more, walked back to the pony, and led it by the lower lip to another stance beside him. That difference of a few yards' run to his horse might mean the difference between life and death to him, if his enemies should be stalking him through the bush.

"Why do your women not work in the fields as the women of other people do?" I asked Waku one day. In every other African tribe I had known, the women did

the field work while the men did the hunting and beer drinking.

"Woman plenty much fool. No run fast. No ride horse. Other Pagan catchum quick."

Better than all things my Pagan neighbors loved meat. The head of their enemy was the best, but they ate any meat at all, fresh or otherwise. I once watched them clean up a donkey which had died under pack on the road. Before it had well kicked its last a Pagan appeared, little iron knife in hand, and straddled the emaciated carcass, hacking off lumps and stuffing them into the small skin bag he carried between his shoulder blades. He was only a hack or two ahead of his neighbors. Pagans came running out of the bush from all directions. In a few minutes the carcass was buried under a writhing mass of silent Pagans, their black bodies streaked with blood, hacking desperately, grabbing chunks of meat from one another, occasionally rolling over and over in the dust of the road, biting, scratching, and gouging for the possession of such a tidbit as an eye or a piece of the entrails. The only rule of the game seemed to be not to use their knives on one another.

When they had finished, maybe fifteen minutes after the first arrival, there was nothing left but scraped bones—and the complete genital organs, which had been respectfully placed to one side.

I tackled Waku for information next time I saw him.

"You eat your enemy's head to get his strength and courage," I asserted.

"Head good. Make strong. Make clever."

"Then why do you leave that part of the donkey which you leave?"

"Make too much strong—too many pickins*—. Pagan catch plenty hunger when village too big."

* Children.

GANGSTERS AND G-MEN

ONE night five of us sat down to a game of poker on my veranda, a wide porch around which the passion creeper had draped itself thickly.

"Is the window of your bedroom locked, Rainier?" asked Best about ten o'clock. "I thought I heard a noise round that end of the house."

"Can't lock it," I replied. "But it's steel framed and only opens a little at the top. A man would have to be an athlete to get in. However, I'll have a look after this round."

Shortly I threw in my cards and got up. Halfway across the veranda I thought I heard a click in the passion creeper near me. I paused. In that second the hyena laughed outside—the brute used to rummage in my garbage nightly and give thanks by serenading me—howling his wolf howl with the throb of maniacal laughter in it.

We all started to our feet—it always made us do that, even when the pot was fat and the betting tense. Then we laughed at ourselves. By that time it was too late to get a shot at the animal and, besides, we heard him, or something at any rate, crash through the bushes in the garden in flight.

"It was that cursed hyena of yours that I heard," laughed Best. "You've got the queerest taste in pets."

I returned to the poker table, forgetting about the click I thought I had heard—I was to remember it later, however.

The game broke up about midnight. After the others

had gone I went to my room. To my consternation the whole of the steel window frame had been hacksawed through and removed bodily, and the steel safe, weighing several hundred pounds, had been carried away. Nothing else in the room had been touched as far as I could see. That the day before had been payday I thanked my lucky stars. There had been a thousand pounds in silver money in that safe the night before. After I had paid the men there had remained less than fifty.

I took my rifle and followed the deep spoor of several heavily laden men a few hundred yards to the edge of the bush. There I stopped. I suddenly remembered the click. It had sounded like the click my father's old Snyder rifle used to make when I cocked it as a boy. One of the thieves had a Snyder, I was willing to bet.

Just then, in the bush ahead, about half a mile away, there was the dull thud of a dynamite explosion. The burglars evidently knew enough to blow in a safe door, whoever they were. It seemed hardly conceivable that any of our savages were sophisticated enough for that.

Returning to the compound, I aroused Malachi and the half-dozen doguerris and, spread in open order, we approached the place from which the explosion had sounded. The doguerris, without their red police uniforms now, were brandishing their tribal spears. I hadn't thought it necessary to damp their ardor by telling them that one of the bandits was probably armed with a rifle which was capable of making a hole in a man big enough to poke your fist through.

Malachi appeared at my side silently, like a white ghost in the blackness of the bush.

"Smell dynamite, sah," he whispered. "When I flash light in front Massa get ready to shoot."

After moving a few paces to one side he suddenly turned on his flashlight, swinging the beam from side to side. We spotted the safe in a moment, but the bandits were gone. They had blown off the lock quite expertly.

I drove to Naraguta next day to report the matter to Molyneux.

"Who the hell could it have been?" I asked when I had told him everything that had occurred. "There isn't anyone around here, except white men, who know enough to do a job like that."

Molyneux selected a cigarette carefully from his silver case, offering one to me.

"Maybe I can throw some light on it," he remarked, tapping his cigarette against his thumbnail. "Some time ago the Tutinwada Mine imported a couple of American Negroes as clerks. Said that the Lagos mission-trained clerks, whom everyone had been using up to date, were a set of damned thieves, which was true enough.

"However, the imported Negroes turned out to be even worse. Where a Lagos black stole a shilling or two, his American brother went the whole hog. One night a week or two ago they cleared out with the whole mine payroll, blowing the front of the mine safe in with dynamite.

"Furthermore, at the same time they stole an old Snyder rifle from the Tutinwada manager's house." He looked at me quizzically as he spoke.

"Great God, then the click that I heard *was* from a Snyder."

"I'm afraid you came close to doing more than hear it," he said gravely. "I'll round those devils up eventually. They must have got some local recruits to have carried away your safe. A big gang is easier to catch

than one or two smart men. Meantime, keep an eye open at night, although it's unlikely they will try your camp again."

A week or so later the Tutinwada Mine messenger was found murdered, his head blown to bits by a heavy-bore rifle. The mine payroll which he had been carrying from the bank in Naraguta was missing. Twice they had scored on Tutinwada.

Two more mine messengers were robbed, after having been clubbed from behind.

Our whole mining community was stirred. Up till now there had been no serious crimes in the country—a killing and eating by cannibals were no crime. They were just following their custom, which was perfectly legal according to their lights. So were the frequent Hausa love triangles, when husband and lover went at it with spears and did one another in. The only thieving any of us had heard of in the country was of some yams or a chicken once in a while. The theft of a couple of brass anklets was robbery on a large scale on the Bauchi plateau and had set the market places gossiping for weeks. Now mine managers began to bring their own payrolls from the Naraguta bank, carrying them in cars with an armed guard. White men out for a game of poker or Slippery Sam hunted up long-disused revolvers before mounting their horses for an hour's ride in the darkness. The whole feeling of security under which we had been living was shattered.

Then Molyneux pounced. His intelligence department had been quietly working. With a dozen of his askaris he surrounded the bandits one night in a hut where they had been hiding, near the edge of the plateau, fifty miles from the scene of their crimes.

When daylight came he rushed them. The fellow with

the Snyder got off one shot which crushed an askari's chest in. Then the askaris got home with their bayonets. Four of the gang were killed. The remaining four, including the two American organizers of the gang, were clubbed unconscious and taken into Naraguta jail.

One day I received a note from Molyneux asking me to come to Naraguta and bring Malachi with me—something to do with the trial.

Unfortunately the request came about the end of Ramadan, the Mahometan Lent. Malachi and every other Moslem worker on the property were keyed up to a high pitch of religious fervor, irritable and explosive. For nearly thirty days they had fasted each day till sundown and their nights had been spent dancing endless dances to the beat of tomtoms.

I sent to the compound for Malachi, however, intending to tell him to hold himself in readiness for a journey to Naraguta next day.

The doguerri came back with his eyes starting.

"Malachi heap mad, sah. Pretty soon Malachi lib for kill mans."

"What do you mean?"

The doguerri waved his arms dramatically.

"Malachi say all unbeliever must die. Say Mahomet great prophet. Say Mahomet kill unbeliever. Say robe of Mahomet fall on Malachi." The doguerri was a Yoruba from down the Niger way. He didn't believe in Mahomet, pagan that he was. A full belly and a fat woman were about the extent of his beliefs.

"Go and fetch the other doguerri. Take Malachi and tie him up before he kills any unbelievers."

"Yes, sah." The doguerri went.

Soon there was the sound of a riot in the compound. Then I heard Malachi's great voice, hysterical now—

"ALLAH—ALLAH—ALLAH"—screams from women and the roar of an excited crowd.

Running to the compound, I saw a throng surging between the huts, jamming the narrow gate in their attempt to get out of the enclosing fence.

Malachi had run amok, they told me. When the doguerris had tried to arrest him he had grabbed his sword and rushed on them, calling on Allah. The doguerris had run for their lives but Malachi had continued his charge, slashing madly at the crowd. At least five men were dead and many more wounded, they cried. If I did not do something quickly they would go to their homes where there were no madmen with swords to chase them.

I squeezed in at the gate and got clear of the crowd. I wished I had brought a weapon, although I was fond of Malachi. There was a pick leaning up against the compound wall. I shook the iron clear of the handle.

Then I saw Malachi. He was standing up against the wall of one of the small circular huts in which the laborers lived, not twenty yards away. In his hands was the sword, with a darkly stained patch on the blade. His eyes were bloodshot. There was a white patch of froth where his mouth cut the great black beard.

Quietly slipping round to the back of the hut against which he was standing, I edged toward him. He heard me and turned, just as I swung the heavy pick handle with all my might and hit him on the head. The pick handle stung my hand with the force of the blow. A thud like wood striking stone, but there was no sensation of crunching bone, which I had dreaded. Malachi sprawled, flat on his face, almost at my feet. He began to struggle up, but the six doguerris piled on top of him. They tied him hand and foot.

"Malachi done tied, sah," reported the one I had ordered to do it, as though it had been done without my assistance.

We kept him tied and under guard for two days, until his berserk fury had left him. He hadn't done much damage, anyway. The tale of killed and wounded resolved itself into one rather severe cut on a doguerri's thigh. Later Malachi accompanied me to the trial to give evidence.

The four prisoners were an insignificant-looking lot. Two of them were Hausa mine laborers. The two leaders were American Negroes whose yellow complexions would have earned them the epithet of "half-castes" in South Africa. There wasn't much difficulty in proving them guilty of both murder and robbery. Finally one of them broke down and confessed the whole story.

It was the click of a Snyder cocking that I had heard the night of the robbery at my house, it seemed. The man who was confessing had been posted to watch us playing poker, he said, with instructions to shoot the first man who approached the end of the house where they were doing their job. If it had not been for the hyena's howl stopping me, I should have been a dead man before I had gone another yard. The hyena had also scared the bandit, howling like a lost soul right in his ear—it had been he who had crashed through the bushes.

The four bandits were sentenced to be hanged, pending confirmation by the Governor, to whom the evidence would be forwarded for consideration.

"I'se an American, Boss," cried the leader. "I got de protection ob de American consul." Unfortunately for him, consuls of any sort had not yet penetrated to the Bauchi plateau.

The sentence of death was confirmed by the Governor. Molyneux decided to have the hanging at the time of the next quarterly race meeting in Naraguta, when he would have the support of the bulk of the white community of the plateau.

The day of the hanging and race meeting arrived.

The great market place of Naraguta was about a hundred yards square, surrounded by the thatched booths of Hausa traders. It was packed with black humanity, as some twoscore of the white population of the Bauchi plateau filed onto it on the morning of the execution, through the staked-off path which was kept clear of black spectators by some of Molyneux's askaris. In the center of the market place an area thirty yards square had been roped off for the accommodation of the whites. It was being held inviolate by a thin line of askaris facing outward, who kept the crowd back by the simple expedient of dropping their rifle butts on the bare toes of the front rank when they pressed forward too enterprisingly. There were thousands of natives milling about in the square, men of the fighting Hausa race mostly, co-tribesmen both of the two accomplices of the American bandits and of the askaris themselves, armed with spears, knives, or Hausa swords. But there were a good many women and children in the crowd, too.

I felt most damnably afraid as I took my place inside the ropes. If that crowd should want to interfere with the hanging, those fifty askaris couldn't stop them for a moment and they would overwhelm us easily.

In the center of the roped-off square a trench had been dug some five yards long, two yards deep, and two yards wide. A long, heavy pole extended along the center of the trench, six feet above it, supported at either end by a wooden triangle.

As soon as we had taken our places the four bandits filed in, each with a rope around his neck, the other end of which was held by an askari. Molyneux brought up the rear of the procession, looking as cool as though he were dispensing drinks on his own veranda.

A low noise burst from the crowd, the expelled breath of thousands of lungs.

The four prisoners were aligned beside the trench, their ropes tied to the pole.

Unexpectedly Molyneux raised his right arm.

At what was evidently a prearranged signal the four askaris who had brought in the prisoners prodded them sharply behind with their bayonets. A confused shout broke from the crowd as the prisoners jumped involuntarily forward at the prod and hung dangling, kicking, and choking over the pit.

It was the critical moment. Those of us who had revolvers in our pockets gripped the butts hard, half expecting to be overwhelmed by a rush of savages bent on vengeance for the killing of their co-tribesmen.

But native psychology is a queer thing. A huge roar of laughter arose.

As the hanged men kicked and struggled with protruding tongues and contorted faces, the crowd went wild. Fat old Hausa chieftains rolled on their backs and slapped their bellies while tears of laughter streamed from their eyes. Hausa ladies raised their children shoulder high that they might see the fun. Spear-armed warriors hugged one another and rocked with their heads on one another's shoulders in their spasms of mirth.

Sweat was pouring down my face with the reaction. My knees trembled.

"Christ Almighty," exploded Best beside me in a

quavering falsetto, as he pushed back into his pocket the butt of a huge Webley revolver which he had half drawn. "That was a tough one. I went through all the sensations of being killed."

With several others I repaired to Molyneux's house for drinks. We needed them.

"Why in the name of God, Molyneux, didn't you hang those fellows in proper style—with a regular drop?" asked someone.

"I reckoned it would be too dangerous—the crowd would most likely have rushed us because it would have been a pure act of killing. I thought that if I could prolong the agony a bit, the crowd would begin to laugh—the business would appeal to them as a diversion. The only chance we were taking was that the crowd would get stirred up while waiting. That's why I rushed the affair and made them jump as soon as the ropes were tied, without waiting for their last bequests or any other formalities."

Molyneux knew the psychology of the half-million blacks over whom he ruled as a benevolent autocrat, with only the intangible prestige of the white man and a few score native askaris to back him.

We had hardly settled to our drinks when the askari orderly announced that a deputation of Hausa notables wished to wait on Molyneux.

They filed in, half-a-dozen stately Hausa emirs, some of whom had ridden over a hundred miles to see the white man's justice executed. Tall figures, the pride of many generations of command in their hawklike, intelligent faces, they bowed their foreheads to the ground before the young, thirty-year-old white man. It was the salute of one proud man to another, like that of an army officer to his colonel.

The Emir of Zaria was the spokesman—within the wall of his capital city of Zaria were a hundred thousand people; he could put in the field a couple of thousand armed horsemen; fifty women made up his harem and ten thousand of his cattle roamed the plains. A man of substance.

"We have come to thank you for the spectacle which your honor has provided for the enjoyment of his children," recited the Emir in stately Hausa phrases. "We have come also to beg that you will repeat the performance tomorrow. It was our custom, in the days before the white man came, to kill malefactors as a spectacle. But it took the brains of a white man to devise such an amusing way for a man to die."

"Great Heavens, I can't go hanging men for fun."

"We have thought of that difficulty, your honor. We have many slaves and will be glad to provide the slaves for the hanging."

Molyneux refused, of course. But it was a long time before he heard the end of the hanging. The local emirs began to copy him, hanging slaves for the diversion of their people. For months he was busy trying such cases, until the heavy fines he imposed discouraged the practice.

"Molyneux was a good man," the emirs said. "But he was unjust in this one thing. He denied to his black children the pleasure of entertainment which he practiced for his own friends."

CHAPTER V

THE FIRST WHITE WOMAN

IT was about a year after my arrival when I received the telegram from Winnie—news of her had been scarce, as postal arrangements in wartime were liable to frequent interruptions. The telegram had been handed in at Lagos the day before. She was on the boat train, coming up, I read to my astonishment—she had suggested coming to me more than once but I had vetoed the suggestion, as the country was too rough and there wasn't another white woman on our tin field among the cannibal Pagan tribes.

But she was coming. She was here in the country already. I could have shouted in my joyful surprise. By God, I had missed her. Those few months with her in Mozambique had spoiled me for a bachelor existence.

She wired me to meet her somewhere along the line, as she had no camping kit or supplies for the journey. I remembered that the dining car came only as far as the Yoruba country along the Niger River. After that it was taken off and trains ran only by day, because of the Yorubas' habit of stealing rails from the track to forge into spears and hoes. For these nightly halts the passengers were supposed to carry their own camp outfit and supplies.

My one chance of meeting her in time to do any good was to catch the weekly tin train which was due to leave railhead in a few hours.

It was early morning three days later when the slow tin train I had caught by a few seconds drew up alongside the waiting boat train at Minna station. I jumped

into one of the corridor coaches, leaving my cook to transfer the camping outfit and supplies. I had borrowed cook, outfit, and supplies complete from a total stranger up the line—there had been no time to collect them before leaving.

Winnie was in one of the first compartments I entered. I expected her to be surprised to see me. She laughed.

"The whole train knew you were on the way down. Every stationmaster wired the news as you passed."

"How did you manage without supplies since yesterday morning when they took the dining car off?" I asked.

"There must be twenty men on this train," she replied. "Every one of them offered me his kit. I've had twenty invitations to every meal, and three proposals of marriage thrown in since I left Lagos."

"How did you manage the stopover in Sierra Leone, where you changed boats? There's only a Negro hotel there."

"I told the Elder Dempster Steamship Company's manager that I was coming up to the tin field and had to stay somewhere till my boat came in. He nearly had a fit. Said I would be the first white woman to penetrate the cannibal Pagan country. Told me he had only a bachelor establishment, but he called the Governor up and I stayed at Government House."

And I had been worried about her!

A few days after Winnie and I had reached home I walked onto the veranda of our house on the plateau at sunrise. To my surprise I saw a silent circle of some twenty armed Pagans squatted on the grass outside, knees drawn up till their heels touched their naked hams. They rose and saluted me respectfully, then

seated themselves again. From their tribal markings I could see they were from the Barram country a few miles away, territory which was closed to the white man by the British authorities because the Pagan inhabitants were so utterly untamed as to constitute a menace.

I sent the houseboy for Malachi to interpret.

"These be Barram Pagans, sah," he confirmed. "Plenty bad. Chop plenty man in their country. Now they come to talk to Massa. Say they come in peace because all Pagan know Massa good man, speak truth, good friend to Pagan. They want to ask Massa something."

"All right. Tell them to go ahead."

His skin shining with castor oil, his white spot of bark his only clothing, the tall black Pagan who was evidently the leader of the band spoke, making quite an oration. His demeanor was solemn, as though dealing with a matter of importance.

"Pagan king say there be too much trouble in his country. Say his young men talk too much, then fight too much 'cos they not fit to agree."

"What can't they agree about?"

"Pagan believe that white man not born of woman but come out of black water like Pagan gods. All Pagan know that. Now some mans say that white Massa got white woman. Other mans say first mans liar. They fight too much all time. So Pagan king come here with other wise mans to talk with Massa. Pagans know Massa not lie. If Massa say he have white woman all mans believe, not fight more. I tell Pagan that Massa got white woman. Pagan call me liar. Say there is no white woman 'cos all white people are mans."

"Tell the Pagans that I have a white woman—here, in this house."

Malachi translated. Consternation fell upon the group. They looked at one another with shocked surprise. One of their articles of faith had been shattered. It was as though someone were to rise in a missionary meeting and cry, "There is no God."

The Pagans conferred together for a moment, their woolly heads close together, waving hands and quacking vehemently. Then the leader spoke again.

"Pagan say he believe white Massa 'cos white Massa not lie. But Pagan say he want see white-man woman."

I called through the window into our bedroom. Winnie appeared presently and stood beside me. She had thrown a thin silk dressing gown over her silk night-dress and her hair shone golden in the rays of the rising sun. Her slender figure, blue eyes, pastel coloring, and delicate features were a sharp contrast to the great black limbs and broadly molded faces of the naked savages confronting us.

A gasp of astonishment came from the Pagans as she appeared. In a moment they had pressed round us, quacking excitedly, staring, fingering the fine texture of her hair, touching the silk of her garments. The acrid, hyenalike smell of their bodies pressed down on us with almost tangible force.

Winnie moved a little closer to me, but gave no visible signs of fear. Fortunately she had been brought up among the Zulus and for her the naked body of a savage was nothing to be afraid of.

"Tell these men to step back," I ordered.

They stepped back at once at Malachi's order. There had been nothing disrespectful about their behavior. They had been overwhelmed by curiosity, that was all, just as we should be at some being from Mars.

The chief alone remained near us. He gazed fixedly

at Winnie's figure. Then he deliberately maneuvered so that she was silhouetted in her thin covering against the rays of the sun.

He retired to the group, evidently satisfied. He made a pronouncement with the solemnity of a high priest accepting a new article of faith.

"White man speak truth. This be white-man woman. Woman—but very ugly."

In Mozambique I had been afraid that life would go heavily for Winnie. There was no fear of that here. There were other tin mines on the Bauchi plateau, which was rapidly developing into one of the world's great tin-producing areas. The tin field mustered over a hundred whites among whom I had made several close friendships.

Harry Watson was operating the Mongu property, ten miles down the river from where I lived. Harry was a New Zealander, a Goliath of a man, six feet six inches, two hundred and fifty pounds of smiling good nature. He had joined up in August, 1914, Life Guards, taken a bullet through his stomach, married his English nurse while he was convalescing, been drafted to Nigeria in the same way as I.

There was a Yorkshireman named Moon who operated one of the smaller properties near Ropp. His face was as round as his name implied. He, too, was of the jovial type. When he had "drink taken" he beamed sufficiently to justify his sobriquet of "full Moon."

Macguinness, the little fox-hunting Irishman, was Harry Watson's assistant. A wisp of a man, built like a jockey. In fact Mac was so "horsey" altogether that his early days might have been spent in a racing stable.

Most of the mines had constructed tennis courts and

tennis tournaments between the different properties were usual at week ends. Winnie was a good tennis player—she had been county champion at home in South Africa—and was in great demand at every mine where a tennis court had been installed. Her position as the only white woman in the community gave her the status of a queen and men would ride fifty miles to take tea with us, staying on to drinks, small-chop, and dinner, while they told her about their girls at home or the wives and children they hadn't seen since they had been drafted to the mines in the early days of the war.

But by far the biggest interest on the plateau was racing. There were plenty of good Hausa ponies to be picked up cheap. Each mine began its racing stable. Quarterly race meetings were organized in Naraguta. Training took on all the seriousness of a preparation for the Derby. Jamieson, our Scotch engineer at the power station, and Moon developed into rival bookmakers. Rumors stirred mining circles on the Bauchi to enthusiasm or despair. Mongu's "Monazite" was rumored to have strained a tendon—Tutinwada's "King's Ransome" immediately jumped to favorite for the coming Naraguta Cup. Hausa messengers sped wildly among the Pagan villages across the rolling plateau to the mines where the two bookmakers were employed, carrying their masters' bets.

The Bauchi was a pleasant place to live, on the whole. We were six thousand feet above sea level, which gave us a climate on the cool side, although we were almost on the equator. The most unpleasant time of the year was the winter, when the *Harmattan*, or wind from the Sahara to the northward, blew from December to March, almost without cessation. It was a cool wind, but so dry that a piece of heavy note paper could be broken in two

between the fingers, so laden with fine desert sand that visibility was limited to a few hundred yards and the world smelled of dust.

The possession of the only white woman on the plateau brought an unexpected honor, I soon found. The Fulani nomad counts his wealth in women and cattle nominally. Actually women are the criterion of his standing because cattle are exchangeable for women, just as shillings are exchangeable for pounds. In a womanless community of white men the Fulani had accepted without question the fact that Molyneux, the district commissioner, was the authority, the chief of the strange tribe of white men whose members disappeared into legendary distance from time to time, to be replaced by others who arrived from the same dimly visualized land, where were bred trains, dredges, automobiles, and other queer mechanical animals—neither the Fulani nor the Pagan could be weaned from the idea that machines were alive. I have seen a Pagan deliberately scratch the paint on a car, "to see its blood," he explained when reproved. Another pushed a spear into a tire one day and was fully confirmed in his belief by the hissing noise of escaping air, like the noise from the stomach of an animal when perforated.

But Molyneux was single; at least he had no white woman to show. True, I had only one white woman whereas any well-to-do Fulani numbered his by the dozen. But I had one more white woman than any other white man. I was therefore the richest and most important white man in the community, by inference its chief. They began to bring their tribal problems to me for judgment.

Among a nomad people whose great herds of cattle wandered freely on the unfenced plains it was to be ex-

pected that the ownership of cattle would constitute their most frequent cause of dispute. It was a cattle case they first brought to me to try. I should have sent it on to Molyneux, but it seemed a shame to make them travel sixty miles to decide the ownership of an old humped cow, who was placidly chewing the cud. I decided the case by turning the cow loose and awarding her to the man whose herd she joined.

I had laid up trouble for myself. My verdict had evidently been popular. I began to be swamped by cases of all kinds. It was only by dint of constant refusal that I was able to convince the Fulani that Molyneux was still the proper man to appeal to.

Winnie, as became a South African girl, was a fine horsewoman. Mounted on our ponies we would roam the country within a reasonable ride from our home. We would halt at Fulani encampments—a few cowhides thrown over bushes were all the buildings those nomads ever bothered about—and be regaled with grilled beef and milk, gossip about calves and children.

We were lucky enough once to witness the queer Fulani ceremony of trial by ordeal before marriage. There were several hundred Fulanis of both sexes present, apparently the whole of the temporary floating population from the encampments of the district, where the Fulani grazed their herds indiscriminately among Hausa and Pagan.

The marriageable maidens, about a score in number, were demurely seated in a row upon the grass. Like their elders they were clad in the usual white flowing robe, which looks like a bedsheet carelessly draped about the figure. They giggled among themselves. Their roving black eyes traveled across the few yards of brown veld to where a somewhat larger group of marriageable

bachelors was standing. When the eye of a maiden caught the eye of a would-be bridegroom, the maiden cast down her gaze—if her complexion had permitted, she would no doubt have blushed. The girls appeared to be thoroughly enjoying themselves.

On the contrary their suitors appeared glum and nervous. Their keen features seemed grim and they spoke little among themselves. The reason was soon apparent when a white-bearded Fulani elder stepped from the crowd with two *kibokos*, or rhinoceros-hide whips in his hand. The *kibokos* were about five feet long. They tapered from about an inch in diameter at the handle to a point as fine as a coarse knitting needle.

Two of the suitors threw off their robes and stepped out onto the grass, clad only in their breech clouts. Solemnly the ancient handed to each one of the *kibokos*.

The suitors took station opposite one another. The one who appeared slightly the younger turned sideways, bracing his muscles, his brows meeting with the tenseness of his expression.

The other, whose back and shoulders were criss-crossed with the healed scars of some previous ordeal, swung his *kiboko* with all his might in a quick drawing stroke across the waiting back, causing the blood to spurt. The stricken man made no sound or movement, but we saw the sweat break from every pore till he looked as though he had just emerged from a bath.

Slowly he straightened, blood running from his back, and brought his *kiboko* down on the scarred back of the other. Either he was less expert in the drawing stroke which cuts the skin, or his own wound had shaken his nerve. His stroke sounded like the crack of a whip. A long weal sprang into being across the scarred back of the first striker, but the blood did not flow.

"O God . . .," from Winnie, sitting beside me on the grass, among the Fulani family whose guests we were. She buried her face in her hands.

Stroke after stroke they made alternately. The swish of the kibokos and the hideous shock of those deadly whips on human flesh sounded with clocklike regularity. It seemed as though it would go on forever. Both suitors were streaming with blood. Their eyes rolled wildly. But neither uttered the first sound of complaint which would have disqualified the man who uttered it.

Then there was a sudden end. One of them fainted, even as he was raising his whip to strike. It was the younger, he who had received the first blow. The members of his family rushed forward, wailing, and carried him from the blood-stained patch of grass which was the arena. They mourned because there would be no new woman in their patriarchal circle this year, to breed men to herd their cattle, or women to be bartered for fresh additions to their herd. Next year perhaps he might have gained more fortitude or meet an opponent with less. But for a year he was condemned by tribal custom to bachelorhood.

The victor stood, swaying on his feet, looking as though he too would collapse. Then, with a visible effort of his will, he collected himself, walked feebly to the line of waiting girls, took one of them by the hand, and led her away.

Another pair took their turn for the ordeal.

"Peter, take me out of this," groaned Winnie. I was feeling not too good myself.

About six months after Winnie's arrival she began to expect a child. I was worried. I wanted her to go home to South Africa to have it. There was no chance of proper medical attention on the plateau. There had been a doc-

tor serving on the tin mines at the time of her arrival. But he had long since gone on leave—we heard that he had been drafted into the army. There were rumors of another to replace him, but he had not yet arrived.

Winnie seemed to have no fear. She said that her grandmother had borne her mother alone in an ox wagon while her husband was away hunting stolen cattle. That her mother had borne her first children with no better attention than that of an old Zulu woman. That if a Hausa woman could have her children on the Bauchi plateau a South African girl could do the same. That if she did go home, the separation from me and the consequent worry would do her more harm than the lack of a doctor. So she stayed.

We began to take walks to replace rides and tennis. Behind us came the procession of Winnie's pets. She had a way of her own into the hearts of animals. Any savage who caught a young hare, monkey, bird, or antelope could always earn a shilling by bringing it to her to tame. At one time we had following us a mongrel bitch with a litter of half-grown pups, several cats, two monkeys, an antelope, and a young jackal. They seemed to get along quite amicably together. Given the addition of an ark and a flood, history would almost have repeated itself.

We were expecting the baby in November of 1918, but the influenza epidemic struck us at the end of October. The native laborers began to die by the thousand, streaming away from the stricken mines to seek their homes, leaving their dead bodies along the roads in such numbers that the hyenas and vultures were surfeited and the decaying corpses caused the countryside to smell like a neglected battlefield.

The whites went down, too. In my camp I was the

only man left on my feet, staggering with weakness, keeping myself going by drinking large quantities of neat whiskey whenever I felt like collapsing. Five white men and one woman were my charge, dependent on my strength for life. The servants had long since stampeded and left us to fight it out alone.

Winnie was unconscious when the child was born. It lived an hour or two only. I staggered with it to the garden which Winnie had made in front of the house—the ground was softer there. Weakly I scraped a shallow hole and buried it.

Winnie died next day. By that time the worst of the epidemic had passed. Watson, Best, Moon, and Jamieson came, skeletons of their former selves. We made a coffin. I went to dig the child up to bury it with her—I thought she would have liked it so.

The hyenas had been before me. The shallow grave was empty.

DEATH

THE influenza epidemic had lasted about two weeks on the Bauchi plateau. During that time the mines had been shut down while their white administrators fought for life, the stronger nursing the weaker. When the epidemic ended and we had buried our dead, we turned our attention once more to the mines which were our charge.

My compound looked deserted when I entered it for the first time after the trouble had caught us. The long rows of mud huts which had housed several thousand laborers a week or two before lay silent in the sun. The rows of Hausa traders' booths which bordered the market place were emptied of their wares. The corpse of a week-dead Hausa woman lay in one, in her hand the piece of gaudy cotton cloth which she had staggered there to steal, even as death overtook her. Beef bones littered the butchers' stall and pariah dogs growled at me as I approached and disturbed their gnawing. A smell of carrion pervaded the whole encampment.

In the first hut I entered was the stench of death. When my eyes became accustomed to the gloom I made out a huddled figure at the farther end. But there were two live men in the hut, too. They were squatted near the middle over a dish of yams which they were eating with evident pleasure, regardless of the fetid atmosphere. They stood up respectfully as I entered and saluted me with broad grins.

"Sanu, Zaike," they cried.

"What makes this smell?" I asked.

"Mahomed, sah. He done lib for die one weck ago. He stink too much."

"Why the hell don't you take him out and bury him?"

"That be him brothers' job, sah. If we bury Mahomed, his brothers say we stealum his things. Some time Mahomed's brothers come back an' bury him."

"Where are Mahomed's brothers?"

"Done run away, sah. Pretty soon come back."

Mahomed's brothers were probably lying dead along the road somewhere, along with thousands of the multitude of native laborers who had panicked when the epidemic struck the plateau and fled for their homes in the low country, a hundred milcs or more away.

"Drag Mahomed out into the market square," I ordered.

In other huts I found more corpses—more live men, too. All morning we worked until the huts were emptied of their dead. Over fifty corpses were laid out in the market square. Less than fifty live men remained to bury them. Most of the living were weak, too weak to dig. We dragged the corpses to where the dredge lay idle and silent near-by. We dumped them just behind it, under the end of the long stacker which carried away the rocks and sand from which the tin had been washed. I climbed aboard, climbed the narrow stairway to the control room, perched high in the superstructure, turned on the power, and set the machinery in motion. The long line of buckets trembled as I threw in the clutch, groaned, and woke to motion, dragging their loads of sand and gravel from the river bed. In half an hour the dead were buried deep.

I walked to the white crew's quarters. They were convalescent. I had nursed them through their weakness. Enough of them would be at work next day to handle

the dredge for one shift of eight hours out of the three shifts which it usually worked.

It was early afternoon before I went to the brick house on the hill where Winnie and I had lived. There was no meal served, no servants. I would have to see about getting new ones, I supposed. I walked to the window and saw the new-made mound of earth upon a near-by knoll. I poured myself a drink, went outside, caught a horse, and mounted. I could not bear that house alone just yet.

I rode down to see Harry Watson at Mongu. There was strength in that man. Strength in the great body and limbs. Another strength, too, which emanated from him, the strength of his great placid soul which was so strongly set upon its foundations that no disaster would ever shake it.

The road I took was also the road to the low country, along which the rout of terrified laborers had streamed two weeks before, some of them already stricken. It looked like a battlefield. Corpses lay wherever a tree had thrown a little shade to attract a sick man to rest. Most of them were untouched, stinking. Usually in that country the hyenas, jackals, and vultures had a corpse picked clean within a few hours of death. But the scavengers were surfeited.

The tributary of the river I had to cross to get to Harry's house was dry. The trickle of water barely wetted my horse's hoofs. Dust lay thick in the road, but there was rain due. Lightning was flashing among the high peaks where the tributary rose.

Harry and I sat for a couple of hours without exchanging a dozen words, but I arose refreshed. I had drawn strength from him.

There was still dust on the road when I reached the

tributary. But it had rained heavily in the high hills, for the trickle of water had become a roaring torrent.

I dug in my spurs and drove the horse into it, snorting. It was deeper than I had thought, and running with the speed of a millrace between banks where the dust lay thick and the grass was parched and brown for lack of moisture. The water foamed against my upstream leg above the knee, splashing over the saddle. Suddenly the weight of water rolled us and in a second I was down beneath the horse which was plunging to regain his footing. One hoof came down on my chest and pinned me to the bottom. It was gone again and I rose to the surface, fighting for breath, fighting to keep my head above the surface against the drag of water-sodden clothes, boots, and leggings. I was several hundred yards downstream before I made the further bank. It was not until I reached it that I wondered why I fought—I did not want to live.

My horse had disappeared, but I found him round the next bend of the river. He had found his way ashore on the side from which we had entered, the one away from home. I swam the river to him, mounted, and put him at the water again. We crossed without difficulty, swimming where the water ran deep, swift, and smooth.

It was dark before I reached the black and empty house. I sat on the veranda and drank; I had no wish for food. Dawn found me sitting by the mound of earth where she lay buried.

A note came from the main camp, carried by a Hausa runner whose eyes popped with the excitement of the news he bore. THE ARMISTICE WAS SIGNED. The war was over. The moment had come for which the world had prayed for years. For years we had fed our fortitude that we might endure till that moment. Now it had come

I did not care. It had come three days too late for me to appreciate it.

I had not slept for many days. I was taut and tight inside till I had the feeling something in me would snap. I mounted a motor bicycle. I would go and see whether Molyneux were alive. The sixty-mile ride might make me sleepy.

I rode desperately toward Naraguta along the dirt road, which was rough in places. About halfway something happened—I believe that I went to sleep at sixty miles an hour. I remember spinning through the air, then I was dragging myself out from under the machine. Blood was dripping from a cut in my head and my left arm hung broken. I was sore and bruised all over, but the tightness had gone and with it the fear of insanity which had haunted me.

The machine was still rideable. After some difficulty I managed to get it started, mounted, and rode on. I fell off the machine in front of Molyneux's house. A couple of askaris helped me to rise and go inside. I took a stiff drink of whiskey from the decanter set on a table in the empty veranda.

Then Molyneux was there with a stranger who set and bandaged my broken arm with the swift sureness of the professional. The new doctor had arrived—too late.

They put me to bed. I slept.

RECONSTRUCTION

AT Molyneux's house I was left in bed three days, dozing and waking as men will while gaining strength after weakness. For the first time I had leisure to review the two-and-a-half years which had elapsed since I arrived on the plateau. It had been a hard fight right from the beginning, to equip with the most modern machinery and develop to heavy production one of the world's great mines, set in such primitive surroundings as the Bauchi Pagan country—and in wartime, too.

A hundred difficulties had arisen to hamper us. Right at the beginning there had been trouble with the dam on the south river where No. 2 dredge had been built. Damming a river which rose twenty feet in an hour, without warning, when it had rained in the hills, was no joke. I had tried an earthwork first, in my ignorance. The first flood of the wet season had washed that away in a few minutes—the labor of five hundred men for several months had gone down the river like pea soup in the time it took me to smoke my pipe. Then I had tried stone, reinforced by timber. But the rains were continuous by this time and there was too swift a current for the men to work in the center. No. 2 dredge was lying on her homemade slipway ready to launch, and not enough water to launch her into except when the river freshet raged for an hour or two several times a week. In desperation I had finally launched her into a flood, at the risk of losing her, and put the machinery into her while she alternately floated high or lay grounded on a basin

of soft mud. By the time she was finished the rainy season was over, we completed the dam in quick time, and gave her enough water to begin operations.

The war had been our greatest handicap. Importations from England had been prohibited as soon as the submarine blockade had become serious a couple of years back. Since then our development had been a story of improvisation. There is something like a mile of steel cable on a modern tin dredge and the life of a cable under the conditions of dredging is something like six months. For over a year we had been improvising cables, ever since our stock of new ones had been exhausted, splicing odd pieces together, canvassing every mine in the country to buy or borrow odd pieces of cable from other types of machinery which had been discarded as worn out. I had even had a man continually at Lagos, hundreds of miles away on the coast, buying pieces of cable from every ship which had a piece to spare.

There had been the question of bucket bushings too, the curved pieces of manganese steel which took up the wear between the buckets of the dredge and the pins which connected them into an endless chain. That had been a real crisis. When our importations were cut off, Jamieson and I had racked our brains to find a substitute. Without those bushings the pins would wear through the buckets in a few months and the dredges be left impotent. It had taken Jamieson's clever Scotch brain to find the solution. We had about twenty miles of power line connecting the two widely separated dredges to the central power station where the triple set of great Diesel engines hummed day and night. At thirty-five poles to the mile this made several hundred tapered, hollow, cast-iron power poles. Jamieson's experienced eye calculated that in the center of each pole was a section

two feet long whose diameter gave the right curve for a bucket bushing. We cut rough wooden poles in the bush to substitute for the swanky-looking iron ones, which were cut up and fed to the bucket line as necessity dictated. They didn't last as long as the proper article but they kept us going.

And so it had gone. We had beaten every difficulty as it had arisen, by dint of hard work and hard thinking. We had transformed a stretch of barren country from a battlefield of the cannibal Pagan tribes into an industrial entity that was shipping a hundred tons of tin a month into the hopper of Britain's emergency, whence it ran through her industrial machine and came out as munitions of war.

We had spent money like water that first year. The great mining company, whose child Ropp was, had opened wide its purse. DAMN THE COST, PRODUCE THE TIN had been the burden of the cables which had come through from London while we were in the development stage. It had taken a year to get the mine into production. We had spent something like two hundred thousand pounds that year. Since then we had produced about eighteen hundred tons of tin which had sold around four hundred pounds the ton—nearly three quarters of a million pounds. The mines were dead now, since the epidemic. Not a wheel was turning on most of them. But we'd bring them back into production, fit to be handed over to the new men who would be coming out soon to take our places now that the war was over.

Labor was the first step in getting the mines back into production. I talked to Molyneux while I was still in bed.

"How many laborers do you need?" he asked.

"We had about five thousand on Ropp before the flu struck us."

"I'll do what I can for you, but you'll be lucky to get half that number now."

He called a sergeant of askaris.

"Take five men and go to the Emir of Zaria. Tell him that the sickness is past, that the mines need men, and that he will earn much merit with the Government by sending as many of his young men to work as he can."

A week or so later at Ropp the askari sergeant brought me a note from Molyneux. The Emir of Zaria was sending men. They would be very few because the sickness had killed many and the remainder were afraid. The Hausas from Zaria soon began to troop in, however, in small bands of a score or two. In the meantime I had got things going on a small scale with the few men who had remained in camp because they had been too weak to leave when the exodus began. I had done some recruiting among the Pagan villages also, although Waku had lost more than half his people and some of the other villages an even greater proportion.

By the end of 1918 Ropp was in full swing again, on almost the same scale as before the flu. Although the armistice had been signed a couple of months, we were still operating under all the disabilities of wartime as regards importation of supplies. Now something new was to land on us.

There was a silver shortage in Nigeria. Instead of receiving several hundred pounds' weight of silver money from the Naraguta bank when I drove there to draw the weekly payroll, I was presented unexpectedly with a huge bale of paper money. There seemed to have been a paper shortage also. At least a shortage of good paper.

The notes were of two-shilling, one-shilling, and six-penny denomination. They were printed on the cheapest of cheap paper and looked like labels.

I could see trouble ahead on payday. How was I to convince several thousand savages, most of whom had no pockets, to accept paper they could not read instead of the usual silver coins with a hole in the center to facilitate stringing and carrying?

When I got home I called the traders up from the market place, a set of bearded, white-robed old Shylocks.

I passed samples of the notes around as they squatted on the ground before the house, looking like a circle of white vultures awaiting a post mortem on a dying animal.

They held the paper upside down, sideways, endways, and backward, trying to look as though they could read the English printing on it. They passed it back to me gravely, without a word.

"This is the new money of the Government," I explained.

"Him be same color Government flag at Zungeru," remarked one traveled citizen, holding red, white, and blue notes in his hand.

"The red one is two shillings, the white one is one shilling, and the blue one is sixpence."

"Allah grant it."

"On Saturday I shall pay the men with these papers instead of silver."

"That be bad, sah. If workmans no hab silver how him buy chop for eat, cloth for woman?"

"He will buy them with these papers and you must accept the paper in payment."

"Why no more silver lib, sah?"

"Because the Germans have stolen it. The paper is

good. When you go to Naraguta or Zaria the paper will buy as much as the silver."

"How Massa know paper good?"

"The Government says it is good."

"Does Massa say it be good?"

"Yes. I guarantee it is good."

"Then we takum."

Payday came. The first men to be paid with the paper began to raise a riot. There seemed to be a different feeling among the natives since the flu. They were less amenable to discipline. This was partly due to the general reaction after the war tension, but still more to the flu epidemic itself. Strangely enough the flu had dimmed the white man's prestige to some extent. "If the white man were as potent as we had thought him, he would have prevented the sickness from killing us," was the argument.

I stopped the line, as I had stopped it when the first Pagan had been paid years before. Once more I sent a doguerri to the market place with the group of men who were waving handfuls of cheap colored paper and swearing that if they were not paid in silver they would know the reason why. Once more they came back smiling. The paper was good.

That night came the aftermath. Again I faced the squatting circle of traders.

"We no understand paper too much," they explained. "Massa look see paper alright."

I ran through the bundles of paper money which each one carried. Here and there I came across a Worcester sauce or gin-bottle label. There was a considerable pile of them before I was done. The native mind is ingenious, and I thanked heaven that my tastes in Worcester sauce and gin were moderate or it might have cost the com-

pany more than it did to make the paper good. After that I saw to it that the labels on bottles were destroyed on arrival.

But the paper money was the cause of continuous discontent. I did not blame the workmen much. It had been their practice to hoard their savings each week by stringing them and wearing them round their necks. When they had accumulated the price of a woman they would buy one. You can't hoard paper money without pockets. Finally the workmen struck and refused to work till they were paid in silver. There was no silver to be had.

The mine was shut down for several days and I was at my wit's end. It was up to us to keep the mine going somehow till our reliefs arrived. After that it would be their pidgin and we could take the rest we had earned in the war years.

I resorted to a ruse to frighten the men back to work—a ruse that is so hackneyed in tales of early explorers that it ranks with the stories of the glass eye or the false teeth and I hesitate to write it.

I had read recently in an English paper that there was an eclipse of the sun due and that Nigeria would be in the path of totality. I hunted through an old pile of papers and confirmed that it was due the very next day.

I called Malachi.

"Mans no fit to work. Him no like paper," he remarked, shaking his head sadly.

"If they don't go to work I'll frighten them."

"What Massa do?"

"Put the sun out."

He looked at me startled. "Sun go out sometime but no man fit to know before."

"If the sun went out tomorrow would the men be frightened enough to go to work?"

"If Massa tell mans today they too much frightened when sun go out tomorrow. Think Massa big juju man. Fear him too much."

"Then tell the men that if they are not at work tomorrow morning by ten o'clock the sun will go out and it won't come back till I tell it to."

"Massa sure for tomorrow?" His face had brightened at the idea.

"Quite sure."

He strode toward the compound and I heard him haranguing the crowd, who answered him with jeers.

I hoped to God that the eclipse would happen according to the newspaper. If it didn't I was sunk. Even if it did I had my doubts about its scaring the men enough to put them to work. But Malachi was sanguine as to the second part, although he was obviously doubtful that anyone could foretell an eclipse.

The eclipse was due about ten. I was examining the sun long before then through a bit of glass I had smoked for the occasion. When the hour struck without a sign on the sun's disc I began to worry, but a few minutes later I noticed the first indentation. The men were holding a jamboree in the compound, dancing round their tomtoms and uttering shouts of defiance at intervals. Malachi had told me that morning that every local juju man had been retained to make magic against me and insure the sun continuing its daily duty. They did not quite believe that I could put out the sun, but I evidently had enough reputation to make them think it worth while spending a goat or two as insurance.

In a few moments they noticed the eclipse beginning.

The tomtoms and the howling ceased. I could see the witch doctors in the market square from my veranda rattling their juju gourds and making magic as fast as they could, jumping high and turning in the air, spinning round and round while they recited their charms.

When about half of the sun's disc was obscured the nerve of the crowd began to break. A thin trickle of people began to come through the compound gate toward my house. I left the veranda before they reached it and continued my observations from behind the curtains of a window. They halted in front of the house, silent and nervous.

The sun became less and less visible. More and more people began to stream toward me until there was a crowd jamming the entrance to the compound, trying to get out. The crowd in front of the house now comprised most of the men in camp.

I walked out onto the veranda. By this time the sun's rays had dimmed perceptibly to a twilight. The eclipse was almost complete.

"Bring sun back, Massa," chorused a score of voices.

"No. You should have gone back to work when I told you to."

"We go to work now—not fit to lib without sun."

"Too late."

"Gib plenty woman to Massa, plenty goat, plenty yams."

The eclipse was now about as near complete as I thought it would be. While we talked the day had been getting darker and darker.

"If you go back to work now the sun will return in a few minutes. I don't want your women. I'll fine you one goat for my kitchen and a basket of yams."

"We go now, Massa, plenty quick."

Someone noticed a slight increase in the sunlight. There was a howl of relief. The crowd trooped off to the compound chattering happily. They were at work to a man when the afternoon siren called them; we had no more labor trouble on Ropp in my time.

I was tired. Life in those days was one long struggle to keep worn-out machines running till the long-delayed spare parts should arrive to repair them, parts which had been ordered years before but which the war had held up. I was as worn out mentally and morally as the dredges which were my care, and waited for someone to replace me.

One day the sun caught me. I had been doing survey work, running levels for a ditch. The sun flap of my helmet must have moved and let the sun catch the back of my neck while I was bending to squint through the instrument. An hour or two later I felt bad enough to go home and go to bed.

It was sometime in the night when I awoke. I was hot, drenched with sweat, almost suffocated under the weight of blankets piled on me. In my mouth was a taste of bitterness beside which the waters of the Dead Sea would have tasted fresh. Beside my bed sat a man named Roberts, one of the winchmen of the dredge. His head was bowed over his knees. Tears dripped slowly from the tips of a huge pair of moustaches of which he was inordinately proud.

"What in the name of God has happened?" I croaked. There seemed to be actually a coating of some substance on my tongue and lips—bitter as gall.

Roberts started, stared, and rushed to the bed.

"I thought you were gone," he cried. "Your boy came running to the dredge about sundown to say you were in bed, raving. Two of us came running. I sent the other

fellow on a motor bike to Naraguta for the doctor. Your temperature was 105°. I tried to give you quinine tablets but you spat them out, so I took a handful, ground them up, dissolved them in a glass of water, and kept dripping it into your mouth every time you opened it."

"God, man, you've been treating me for malaria. I've had sunstroke. Call the boy to get me a drink—my mouth tastes like a sewer."

"I sent the boy down river for Watson."

Just then there was the sound of a motor bike outside and Watson's bulk rolled in through the door. Roberts appeared with full glasses, long ones. I sat up in bed and grabbed mine.

"No more quinine in this?" I sniffed the liquid suspiciously.

"Whiskey and water," I was reassured. I drank it at a gulp.

Then the thud of galloping hoofs. Moon's arrival brought another round of drinks. Then Jamieson in a car. We were getting hilarious fast.

"What is it?" queried Scotch Jamieson, sniffing at his glass.

"Whiskey," asserted Roberts.

"Yon's no whuskey—it's gin."

"Gin be damned—here's the bottle."

A thought struck me. "Where did you get the water?" I asked.

"From the bottles in the cooler."

"God, man, those are gin. I have to take the labels off or the boys steal them and use them for money. You've been giving us whiskey filled up with gin."

About then the doctor arrived after a grueling sixty miles at night through the mud, riding on the carrier of a motor bike.

"Where's the sick man?" he asked.

I waved a pipe in one hand and a glass in the other.

He was a bit piqued because I had recovered without his help, but after a drink or two settled down like a good sport to make a night of it with the rest of us.

Not many weeks afterward my relief arrived, in March of 1919.

AFTER WORD

IT was off Winnebah on the Gold Coast that I first began to find my feet mentally and shake off the feeling of hopeless lack of purpose that had numbed me since Winnie's death, six months before.

The *Abinsi*, homeward bound from Lagos to Liverpool, was lying at anchor some miles offshore, rolling in the greasy swell of the Bight of Benin. The smooth corrugations slipped under us, sped shoreward, and broke crashing in great combers on the beach two miles away. On the low, bush-covered coast the white buildings of a little settlement shimmered and sweltered in the heat. The "White Man's Grave" they called this stretch of coast, where men served a year, then were granted six months' leave on full pay if they lived. A whaleboat was coming out to us with passengers. The heart-shaped paddles of its Krooboy crew flashed back the sunlight toward us, as though each paddle stroke had fished a mirror from the oily sea.

Water sloshing ankle-deep in its bottom from the surf it had run near the beach, the whaleboat came alongside. A derrick swung the "mammy chair" basket overboard and dropped it with a thump in the boat as it poised on the top of a swell. The mammy chair swung aboard again and two passengers stepped on the deck of the *Abinsi*. One of them was an elderly man, apparently in his late sixties, his hair and pointed beard as white as the crests of the combers inshore. His upright carriage was that of a soldier, and the slight bowing of the knees told the story of long days and months in the saddle. His companion was a white-haired lady, quiet mannered and distinguished.

Later, when the *Abinsi* was under way again, I passed them as they sat together in deck chairs. Catching a word in South African Dutch and being hungry for the speech of my homeland, I introduced myself as a South African.

They greeted me like a son come home from the wars.

"Alamagtag," cried the old man. "So many years since we have seen one from home."

He was General Joubert, one of the three generals of that name who had fought the British in the Boer War. My welcome was warmer still when he found that I knew the Transvaal and that I long ago had done a fencing contract on the ancestral home of the Joubert family, which these two had not seen since they had left South Africa, irreconcilables, after the Peace of Vereeniging, seventeen years before.

Bit by bit, as we sat together on the deck through the voyage, he told me their story. After the Boer War he had left South Africa, as Demilion and many others had done, rather than live under the British. He had sold the family holdings to a cousin whose patriotism had not been proof against the opportunity of buying a fine farm cheaply. The General had then invested his capital in northern France, where it had been wiped out by the German invasion of 1914.

Broke and homeless at sixty-five, he had joined the Servians "because I did not like the British, liked the French less, and the Germans least of all." He had served with the Servian General Staff and accompanied the tattered remnants of the Servian Army through the bitter retreat over the Albanian mountains where so many of them died exhausted in the snow.

"I was sixty-seven then," he added, "and had still my way to make in the world once more, so my wife and I

came to Winnebah, bought a piece of wasteland, and began to develop a cocoa plantation. Now cocoa is booming and we have just sold it for enough to last us the years we have left."

That story was a tonic to me. If this brave old man could make a comeback at sixty-seven I could surely do so at twenty-nine. I started again to plan for the future. From England I would go to America to begin my life again, away from the associations of the past.

Twenty years were to pass before I should see Africa again.

GLOSSARY

Alamagtag	Almighty (S.A.D.)
Askari	Black soldier trained by whites (African idiom)
Baas	Boss (S.A.D.)
Baba	Father (Zulu)
Backvelder	Frontiersman (South African slang)
Biltong	Beef dried in the sun till it is as hard as wood and can only be shaved, not cut, by the sharpest knife (S.A.D.).
Bwana	Master (Swahili)
Commando	Regiment (S.A.D.)
Cut spoor	To cut tracks at right angles (hunters' idiom)
Impi	Regiment (Zulu)
Isanusi	Witch doctor (Zulu)
Isibonga	The tale of a man's deeds. It is chanted on greeting a distinguished person (Zulu).
Kaross	Skin robe or blanket (slang)
Kerel	Fellow (S.A.D.)
Kloof	Wooded gully (S.A.D.)
Laager	Wagon circle drawn up for defense (S.A.D.)
Limbo	Cotton cloth used for trade with natives (trade term)
Lophola	The price of a wife. The Zulus buy their wives. The price varies according to rank and age. Virginity was essential under their own law and added greatly to the price (Zulu).

Long tom	4.7 gun (British Army slang)
Mjerentji	One of the <i>Brachystegia</i> family. The tree grows prolifically in Mozambique but its timber was unknown until I had some furniture made and sent to London about 1910, where I believe it was on exhibition at Maples' for some time. It aroused some interest owing to the beautiful veined texture of the wood (Chemantica).
Nkomabakosi	Literally "The Cattle of the Gods" (Zulu)
Paas op	Look out (S.A.D.)
Predikant	Preacher (S.A.D.)
Reef	South African term for mineral vein
Rooibatje	Red coat (S.A.D.)
Schanse	Stone breastwork for defense (S.A.D.)
Schelm	Bad character, vermin (S.A.D.)
Slim	Wily (S.A.D.)
Slippery Sam	A card game beside which poker pales
Smouse	Trader, peddler (S.A.D.)
Spoor	Tracks (S.A.D.)
Stinkfontein	Stinking spring (S.A.D.)
Stretch of limbo	Length of cloth measured from the tips of the extended fingers to the point of the shoulder of the other arm (trade term)
Strike	Direction of a mineral vein (mining phrase)
Tronk	Jail (S.A.D.)
Umkonto	The short-handled stabbing spear. Chaka owed his military success to the fact that he forced his soldiers to discard the throwing spears with which

	they had been used to fight and to adopt a short-handled spear with a heavy blade which could not be thrown accurately, thus compelling them to come to close quarters with the enemy (Zulu).
Vacht-en-beetje	Literally "Wait a bit." The Vacht-en-beetje thornbush is covered with hooked thorns which are so closely set at varying angles that escape, once hooked, is almost impossible without sacrifice of the garment which has touched the bush. A particularly devilish variety of the vacht-en-beetje is the <i>haak-en-steek</i> (hook and stick) thornbush which varies the hooked thorns by occasional sharp protruding spikes and gets the victim coming and going (S.A.D.).
Verdomt	Damned (S.A.D.)
Vino tinto	Red wine (Portuguese)
Wattle	<i>Acacia molissima</i> , used for tanbark

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